REVELATION *Examined with* CANDOUR.

OR, A FAIR

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

SENSE *and* USE

Of the Several

REVELATIONS

Expreſly Declared, or ſufficiently Implied,

To be given to Mankind from the CREATION, as they are found in the BIBLE.

By a profeſſed Friend to an honeſt Freedom of Thought in Religious Enquiries.

VOLS. FIRST and SECOND.

Containing DISSERTATIONS upon the ſeveral Revelations from the Creation, to the Command given to *Abraham* to ſacrifice his Son, incluſive.

DUBLIN,

Printed by S. POWELL,

For GEORGE GRIERSON in *Eſſex-ſtreet*, GEORGE RISK, GEORGE EWING, and WILLIAM SMITH, Bookſellers in *Dame's-ſtreet*,

M. DCC. XXXII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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PART I.

Containing DISSERTATIONS upon the ſeveral Revelations from the CREATION to the FLOOD, incluſive.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

KING'S

MOST EXCELLENT

MAJESTY.

May it pleaſe your MAJESTY!

IT is the birthright of Your Majeſty's ſubjects of theſe realms, to addreſs their Sovereign upon every exigency; to petition, to inform, to complain; and even, as far as decency will admit, or duty require, to adviſe.

IT is in virtue of this right, that the following diſſertations, are, with all humility, preſented to Your Majeſty, from

an author of no name; who preſumes not, to implore any degree of favour or protection, either to himſelf, or them; the vanity or juſtice of that pretenſion, Your wiſdom, and their worth, will beſt determine.

YOUR Majeſty is call'd, by the Divine Providence, to the protection of a free people; and conſtituted by the nobleſt of Your titles, *defender of the faith*; and as theſe are the higheſt honours, to which mortality can aſpire in this world, and the preſervation of both, (in due dignity, and perfect conſiſtency), the nobleſt privileges of power and prerogative: the ſupport of ſuch a conduct, will be the ſureſt manifeſtation of the wiſdom of Your councils, and the moderation of Your government.

'TIS but too notorious, that a licentious ſpirit is gone out into the world; invading every thing, ſerious and ſacred, with a rude effrontery, till now unknown! ſapping the very foundations of religion, and in that, the beſt foundation of vertue, with

with all the enfuriate violence of ignorance! and all the lawleſs rage of impotence! labouring, with every artifice of argument, every ſpecious deluſion of reaſon, and every bait of ſenſual indulgence, to ſeduce the ſoul, and pervert the will; and in conſequence of both theſe, to ſubvert that *righteouſneſs* which *exalteth a nation*; and to introduce that *ſin*, which is not only the ſad *reproach*, but the ſure ruin *of any people*; and which hath never fail'd from the foundation of the earth, (when once arrived to its heighth) to draw down the ſignal vengeance of God, in calamity, deſolation, and deſtruction.

'Tis true, theſe bold champions of irreligion, have thus far merited of mankind; they have baniſh'd hypocriſy; and, had they ſtopp'd there, it were well: but it is the reproach of human frailty, to run into oppoſite extreams; they have baniſh'd ſhamefaced hypocriſy, but they have eſtabliſh'd abandon'd profaneneſs!

And yet, on the other hand, to take away the liberty of the preſs, and the free-

dom of reaſon in matters of religion, would be to deprive *Britiſh* liberty of a valuable birthright, and human reaſon of her nobleſt uſe! to protect obſolete error, and to rob truth! to rob her of her beſt advantage, and moſt diſtinguiſh'd honour! the honour of ſhining brighteſt upon the ſevereſt trials; and the advantage, of triumphing with moſt glory, after the hardieſt conteſts, and moſt ſignal defeats of her obſtinate enemies!

BUT after all, ſince the beſt temporary bleſſings, may be too dearly bought, or too ſoon defeated, and licentiouſneſs long unreſtrain'd, may, in the end, become unruly; and terminate in dreadful extremities; is there a conduct, that can better become the rulers of the earth, either in point of publick wiſdom, or private intereſt, than timely to check and to reſtrain its progreſs?

MIGHT this be once number'd among the bleſſings of Your Majeſty's reign! might it be Your glory here, and Your eternal

ternal honour hereafter, to repreſs this increaſing, this enormous evil!

NOR will it any way abate the merit of ſo glorious an undertaking, that the way to it, is neither dark nor difficult: that it may be compaſs'd, with eaſe, and without reproach; by *ſcorning the ſcorner*, after the example of God! and ſhewing *grace* and favour *to the lowly*; and by an open, avow'd encouragement of learning, religion and vertue, in all orders and degrees of men: but eſpecially in the clergy.

SHALL Your Majeſty, know it Your higheſt obligation, and Your trueſt glory, to attend, with humility and reverence, upon the publick worſhip of God, and ſhall every abandon'd miſcreant revile that God with impunity! that God by whom You reign! Shall Your Majeſty ſee it to be Your ſureſt ſource of felicity, Your ſureſt ſtay of power, and moſt indiſpenſable duty, to live in the avow'd practice of every conjugal, every parental, every private, and every publick ver-

tue: and ſhall vertue be reviled! Shall neither the veneration of the wiſeſt, nor the practice of the beſt, nor the power of the greateſt men, give it ſanction and ſecurity?

TACITUS tells us, that in the degeneracy of the *Roman* empire, vice became ſo reputable, that thoſe who reverenced vertue in their hearts, did not dare to profeſs the leaſt outward regard for it.

O ſhame to *Chriſtians*! open irreligion, the ſure parent of every vice, and the ſworn foe to every vertue, is now in the ſame heighth of reputation! which is not only a ſurer mark of degeneracy, but (what, methinks, ſhould give ſome alarm to the moſt ſecure libertine) is, at leaſt, as faithful an indication of approaching ruin, ----if God, in his unmerited mercy, prevent it not.

EVIL rulers, have ever been able to render vice reputable; and cannot the righteous do as much for vertue? Is ver-

tue,

tue, (the greateſt of all earthly bleſſings! the faireſt and the loveliest of all human accompliſhments!) the only thing, which power cannot render honourable? which majeſty cannot manifeſt to be lovely? nor courts, becoming? Can the higheſt examples only influence to evil? God forbid! ---- this were to ſtrip grandeur of its nobleſt prerogative, as well as its trueſt and richeſt intereſt. Let a prince hear the advice of a prince, (the wiſeſt of earthly rulers) upon this head; *Take away the droſs from the ſilver, and there ſhall come forth a veſſel for the finer: take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed in righteouſneſs.*

DREAD Sir! it needs little ſagacity to ſee, that the beſt ſecurity of a throne, is its beſt ornament! Without a right ſenſe of religion, ſervants are ſycophants; guards, keepers; and attendants, enemies in pay.

WOULD Your Majeſty live ſecure, and reign glorious; be ignorance deſpiſed, and immorality deteſted! be open pro-

profaneneſs as openly diſcouraged; and lewd ſcurrility upon ſacred ſubjects, upon the higheſt intereſts of reaſonable beings, effectually repreſſed! if not with all that rigour of chaſtiſement, which miſguided zeal may require; yet, at leaſt with all that juſt contempt and indignation, which true religion muſt exact! which wiſdom recommends, and intereſt demands:---- And let the vertue of this conduct be yet heighten'd, by that juſt eſteem, and honourable diſtinction, ſteadily conferred upon true piety; upon piety enlarged, and enlighten'd, as it ought; enlighten'd with uſeful learning, of every kind; and enlarged into a true concern for the temporal, and eternal intereſts of human-kind;--- and the ſincerity of ſuch a diſpoſition, will beſt be ſeen, when it exerts itſelf, with all the openneſs of honeſty, with all the patience of charity, and with all the courage of conviction, in a ſteady oppoſition to error, and defence of truth.

So ſhall Your Majeſty effectually be, what You are ſo gloriouſly titled! remembring

membring always, that it is the nobleſt prerogative of *a king that ſitteth on the throne of judgment*, that he *ſcattereth away all evil with his eyes!* that he is then, truly, the ſubſtitute of the ſupream Sovereign, when the righteous are honour'd in his preſence, and *the vile contemn'd.*

THAT this may ever be Your Majeſty's true character, and conſtant employment; and that God may long preſerve You in it; that of his infinite goodneſs, he may crown You with laſting glory here, and endleſs felicity hereafter, is the conſtant and ſincere prayer of,

YOUR MAJESTY'S,

Moſt dutiful and moſt devoted

Subject and Servant.

THE

PREFACE.

THE *reader is desired to take notice, that the word* revelation, *is, in the following dissertations, taken in a very extensive sense: to signify every interposition of the Divine Providence in the government of the world, out of the ordinary established course of nature.*

IT *may be thought, perhaps, that I should make some apology to the world, for troubling them with any thing relating to religion; (which seemeth, at present, more the subject of light contempt, than real concern); especially such points of it, as have so often been treated before, and by so many able pens;*

but

but ſo far am I from thinking I need an apology, that, I imagine, I ſhall have ſome degree of merit with the reader, if I can entertain him with ſomething new, upon ſo dry a ſubject: Novelty, being at preſent, in writings of all ſorts, (next to irreligion) the reigning merit! and novelty upon a ſubject ſo obſolete, and ſo ſeemingly exhauſted, will, I hope, be allow'd a more than common merit. And, indeed, the ſcriptures ſeem to me, a field, which hath hitherto been rendered, in ſome reſpects, rather barren, than fruitful, by culture: (tho' in itſelf infinitely the richeſt and the nobleſt of all others) or, if fruitful of ſalutary food, to the humble, (which it yielded ſufficiently without culture) yet to the proud, in no eminently better degree, than the earth under the curſe; fruitful for the moſt part, in thorns *and* thiſtles!

IT *muſt be own'd, that much reading and erudition, together with immenſe labour, have been laid out on the bible, ſince the reſtauration of learning; and yet in reality, all this, hath hitherto amounted to little more, than clearing the way, and preparing proper materials, for men of genius. The human*

man progreſs to perfection, is, and ever muſt be ſlow; and that which is moſt eagerly deſired, muſt be laſt expected.

FOR *my own part, I muſt own, that with all human vanity about me, I can conſider the following diſſertations, but as ſo many ſtruggles of an induſtrious man, thro' a thicket; which ſerve at firſt, but to let in a little glimering light: I ſhall not, however, eſteem my labour loſt, if I have let in enough, to prepare the pupil, for a fuller admiſſion of the day, from the ſubſequent efforts of more reſolution and ſtrength.*

THE *misfortune is, ſtudy and knowledge are now almoſt out of date: learning is remarkably in the decline; and of neceſſity muſt decline, in proportion, as the preſent groveling, giddy, frivolous ſpirit of infidelity, (the bane of every thing arduous and excellent) prevails; it being evident, that the only wiſdom upon the infidel's principles is this;* Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die.

HENCE *the true cauſe of the growth of luxury among us, as among the* Romans, *in the decline of the common-wealth, upon the ſpread-*

ſpreading of Epicurus's *principles.* -- *Luxury, together with other vices, begets ſloth; ſloth, ignorance; and ignorance in a vitiated mind, is the ſure parent of infidelity. And as there are faſhions in opinions, as in other things, infidelity is now among the reigning vanities of life! but the vanities of this life,* paſs away! *and fleet faſt into their oppoſite extreams.* --- *Infidelity is now predominant; but, perhaps, the juſteſt fear upon this head, is, that ſuperſtition will ſoon ſucceed it.*

STRANGE *paradox! the true parent of infidelity, is ignorance; and yet it's vaunted origine, is the pride of knowledge! but with this diſadvantage; that it is only knowledge of* evil. *For all knowledge of good, all true and valuable learning in the world, is indiſputably on the ſide of revelation. It is a melancholy reflection!* --- *the preſent pride of infidelity is knowledge! but it's only plea at the laſt, will be ignorance.*

IT *muſt indeed be own'd, that the modern patrons of infidelity, have ſome learning;* Engliſh *tranſlations, and* Engliſh *divines, are familiar to them; but the misfortune is, that*

that they fix, not upon their excellencies, but their errors; and so error is made the test of truth.

IT *hath often been observed by the wisest men, that nothing is so dangerous in any science, as a little learning: a little light, from the false or imperfect view it gives of the noblest objects, is apt to inspire contempt, from ignorance; and vanity, from contempt: when a fuller gleam, exhibiting perfection and excellence in a true light, and a fairer proportion, inspireth admiration, and confusion of face; admiration, from excellence; and confusion, from the remembrance of past arrogance. A slender portion of knowledge, shews only our acquisitions, which make us vain; a larger, displays our wants, and makes us humble.*

IT *is the observation, of that great honour of* England, *and of human nature, the Lord* BACON; *that* a little learning inclineth mens minds to Atheism, but depth in it brings them about again to religion. *What is true of Science in general, is more remarkably so, in relation to divinity; where, as*

there is more room for true wiſdom, there is more range for folly. Tho' the truth is, it is hard to ſay which is moſt ruinous in this point, ſlender knowledge, or downright ignorance; the infidel world, (if you except ſome few men of genius, hurried away by vanity, ambition, imagination, and ſenſual purſuits) being, for the moſt part, divided but into two claſſes: men of little learning, and men of none. Their acquiſitions are unequal; but their capacity and conceit the ſame.

HOW *lamentable a proſpect is human vanity, in this view! a man, whoſe conceit ſets him above ſubmitting to plain truths, and reaſonable evidence, is in a deſperate way! the ſame pride, which ſhuts his eyes upon the cleareſt points, but too often determines him upon the darkeſt. Conducted thus, by vanity, and ignorance, whilſt* the blind, leads the blind, *it is impoſſible, but that he muſt fall into the pit. Happy, if his fall convinces him of his folly, before it concludes in his ruin!*

THAT *men ſhould rejoice in that light, which it hath pleaſed God to diffuſe upon the human*

human ſoul, is but right, and reaſonable; but that men ſhould reject that glorious light, which came down from heaven, to be led wholly by their own, is juſt as wiſe, as it would be, to prefer a glimmering taper, to the ſun in his glory! is in truth, to prefer comparative darkneſs! a conduct, which can only be aſcribed to weak eyes, or a wicked heart. Men love darkneſs better than light, becauſe their deeds are evil! *and yet, tho' the preſent condition of the world, is, in truth, a melancholy proſpect in the eye of true piety, ---- (for what can be more melancholy, than to ſee wiſdom inſulted by folly! and reaſonable beings play with perdition!) yet I can't help thinking, that it is a proſpect, which ſometimes ſhews itſelf to the moſt ſerious eye, in a ludicrous light: who, that beholds the preſent mad inſults of irreligion, can ſometimes forbear imagining to himſelf, the mock-triumph of* Caligula, *for* the ſpoils of the ocean? *Men glory in their ſhame, becauſe they ſee it not; and nothing but more light, can bring them to their ſenſes.*

IF *what is here endeavoured, ſhall be deem'd ſufficient, to humble this ſhameful inſolence of infidelity, and to take away all pretence to triumph, from imagin'd abſurdity, or inconſiſtency, in the moſt exceptionable parts of revelation, my end is anſwer'd:* ---- *That enough is done to this purpoſe, I ſhall not ſcruple to pronounce; at leaſt, if I have any idea of truth, or evidence. And methinks there is mighty vanity, in any man's imagining that he hath; inaſmuch as it requires no vaſt talents, beyond common ſenſe, in any man converſant in rational diſquiſitions, to diſtinguiſh plain truth from manifeſt falſhood, by their common and known marks and characters.* ---- *In truth, there is no more vanity in this, than in imagining that he can diſtinguiſh light from darkneſs, or men from monſters! and if there is not, I will take upon me to ſay, that whatever I have offered for evidence in the following treatiſe, is ſuch.* ---- *That the neceſſity of revelation, the truth of the* Moſaic *hiſtory, and the abſurdity of the objections made to it, are, in many inſtances, as clearly proved, in the following diſſer-*

diſſertations, as any theorem in Euclid; *by axioms, as evident, by propoſitions, as plain, and by deductions, as clear; conſequently, that infidelity here (after a fair examination of the points ſo diſcuſs'd) is as irrational, as diſſent, there. But if any man imagines otherwiſe, and ſhall think fit to arraign my reaſonings, of fallacy or falſhood, his wiſeſt way, if he intends nothing but his own conviction, and the triumph of truth, will be, to try his ſagacity, in detecting, and his ſtrength, in confuting them; which I thus publickly and earneſtly entreat and exhort all ſuch to do; ---- and which, if they attempt to do, by any other method, than that of fair reaſoning, I deſire them before-hand to take notice, that, as I ſhall make no other return than the contempt of ſilence, ſo every candid man muſt conſider ſuch proceeding, in them, as a confeſs'd defeat.*

I SPEAK *this, in the ſpirit of a man, who ſpeaks from conviction; and hath no other intereſt but that of truth: which feareth not to be brought to the teſt of reaſon, ---- and which is often, not more promoted,*

by

by the beſt arguments of it's advocates, than by the determin'd oppoſition of it's enemies, ---- the enemies of every thing vertuous and valuable in this world! for after all; ---- whatever ſpecious pretences the preſent oppoſitions to religion may carry with them, they are, in effect, but the diſpute of Darius's *young men* revived. ---- And however the cauſe of wine and women (the vanities and pleaſures of life) may prevail for a ſeaſon, muſt end, as that did, in favour of truth.* Truth endureth, and is always ſtrong; it liveth, and conquereth, for ever more.

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* Eſdras iii.

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REVE-

REVELATION EXAMINED, &c.

DISSERTATION I.

Of the forbidden Fruit.

I SHALL begin with the first revelation given to *Adam* in paradise, as you will find it in the second chapter of *Genesis*, at the 16th and 17th verses —

16. AND *the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat.*

17. BUT *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

NOTHING could be more agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of God, than to provide plenty of

 proper

proper food for all the creatures he had formed; but as theſe creatures were of very various natures, and conſequently what was proper food for one, might be very improper food for another, *Adam* muſt, in this caſe, be under great difficulties, without ſome direction from God: for ſuppoſing that he had a right to make uſe of any food that came in his way, without an expreſs grant from his Maker, (as I think it evident he had not) it would, however, be irrational in him, to run the riſque of taking any food, which might not only be improper, but pernicious to him; and, without ſome direction from God, it was impoſſible for him to know what food was proper, otherwiſe than by examining the nature of his own conſtitution, and the nature of the ſeveral fruits before him, and the ſuitableneſs of each to the other; and how this could be done in that ſtate is utterly inconceiveable, otherwiſe than by experiment; and the experiment might have been as fatal to him, as it hath ſince been to many of his poſterity; great numbers of whom have been deſtroyed, by fruits apparently fair and inviting. And therefore, as the wiſdom and goodneſs of God were engaged in the preſervation of his own creature (for otherwiſe the very firſt object he met, might have defeated all the ends of his creation) the ſame attributes neceſſarily required that he ſhould be informed how to preſerve his being, and caution'd how he might impair or deſtroy it.

If you ſuppoſe his ſenſes were ſo perfect, that he could, by their aſſiſtance alone, certainly diſtinguiſh what food was ſalutary, and what noxious, you muſt at the ſame time ſuppoſe him formed in much more perfection than any of his poſterity; and if that is allow'd, the truth of revelation is ſo far eſtabliſh'd; and if it is not allow'd, 'tis a demonſtration that revelation in this caſe was neceſſary; — neceſſary, as the wiſdom and the Goodneſs of God: Let the adver-

ſaries

ſaries of reveal'd religion chuſe which part of this dilemma they like beſt.

Now as reaſon ſhews, that this grant and this revelation were, as far as we can conceive, neceſſary, ſcripture aſſures us that they were made; for we are told in the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, that when *Adam* was created, God gave him a right to every herb and tree upon the face of the earth; and when he tranſlated him into paradiſe, we are aſſured, that he gave him free permiſſion to eat the fruit of every tree in the garden, except one; and that he added the reaſon of that reſtraint, becauſe the eating the fruit of that tree would be pernicious to him; *for in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die*; or, as it is in the original, *dying thou ſhalt die*; *i. e.* you ſhall certainly contract a mortal infirmity: now, foraſmuch as a man who hath a mortal infirmity upon him, is, in truth, in a dying condition, he may from that moment be ſtrictly and properly ſaid to be dying. — Whereas then, as I have obſerved to you, reaſon demonſtrates that this revelation was neceſſary, and ſcripture ſhews it to be made; here is a new argument of the truth of ſcripture; for what can be a clearer demonſtration of the truth of any writing, than demonſtrating it to be perfectly conformable to the neceſſary truth and nature of things?

If it be ask'd, why *Adam* was not ſupernaturally endow'd with the knowledge of food as well as of animals? ---- I anſwer, that for ought we know ſo he was: this hiſtory is very ſhort, poſſibly he was fully informed of all plants and fruits, but certainly he was of that on which his own well-being, and that of his poſterity, depended.

But here we are asked by infidels, with high inſults upon our credulity and ignorance, how it was poſſible that eating the fruit of a tree could deſtroy

the ſuppoſed perfection of *Adam*'s nature? make him blind, and vitious, and miſerable; and what is more abſurd than all this, entail guilt and miſery upon his lateſt poſterity?

In anſwer to this, I cannot but own, that theſe difficulties have perplex'd the ableſt heads of all ages; ſince the curioſity and vanity of men have urged them more to canvas the ways of infinite wiſdom with arrogance, than to ſubmit to them with humility; and yet more enlarged obſervations upon the laws of God in the government of the world, added to ſome late diſcoveries in the knowledge of nature, will, I hope, enable us to give all theſe difficulties ſuch clear and rational ſolutions, as may be ſufficient to ſubdue any unreaſonableneſs, leſs than that of infidelity, to the end of the world.

I need not be at much pains to inform the reader, that the ſin of our firſt parents conſiſted in their indulging an irregular appetite, in order to obtain a higher degree of knowledge, contrary to the expreſs command of God. Now I ask, Is it any way inconſiſtent with the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, to puniſh this abuſe of reaſon, by impairing the powers of that very faculty they had ſo wantonly abuſed? or to puniſh the indulgence of irregular appetites in our firſt parents, by giving them up to irregular appetites for the reſt of their lives? and in this caſe, 'tis evident, they would naturally become vitious, and miſerable, and involve their poſterity in the neceſſary conſequences of their own guilt and folly.

We ſee it now an eſtabliſhment of God in the nature and conſtitution of things, that all irregular indulgence of our appetites is attended with evil; and that every ſuch indulgence makes thoſe appetites yet more irregular. ---- We alſo ſee it eſtabliſh'd in the nature of things, that all vain and unreaſonable purſuits

of

of ſuperior wiſdom, all pride of knowledge, naturally tend to impair the powers of the mind, by taking off the thoughts from their proper objects, and by giving them falſe and fantaſtic views; and in conſequence of this, ſeldom fail to end, either in downright madneſs, or ſpecious folly. Now, why in the appointment of God, the ſearch of forbidden knowledge, by an irregular indulgence in forbidden fruit, ſhould not have any or all theſe effects, tho' out of the ordinary courſe, or preſent ſtate of things, I believe all the deiſts in the world will find it hard to explain; unleſs they think it impoſſible that any other than the preſent eſtabliſhment could ever have ſubſiſted: or if there could, unleſs they think it reaſonable, that God Almighty ſhould ſuſpend his laws, and over-rule his own eſtabliſh'd order of nature, in favour of *Adam* and *Eve*, who were, at leaſt in this point, the moſt unpardonable delinquents that ever were in the world.

BUT if it be ſaid, that tranſgreſſing the Commandment of God in this inſtance, is puniſh'd with more than the ordinary penalty of indulging an irregular appetite; I anſwer, that allowing it to be ſo, the penalty of the firſt tranſgreſſion, ſhould in wiſdom and in juſtice, be greater than that of any ſubſequent tranſgreſſion; becauſe all depended upon the firſt; as alſo to deter all poſterity, and to let them ſee, by this example, that whatever penalty God denounces againſt guilt, will infallibly be executed.

BUT this point will be yet more fully cleared, upon the principles of natural knowledge; (even without ſuppoſing any eſtabliſhment different from the preſent, excepting that man was then in the perfection in which it beſt became infinite wiſdom and goodneſs to create him.)

We know there are ſeveral fruits in ſeveral parts of the world, of ſo noxious a nature, as to deſtroy the beſt human conſtitution upon earth. We alſo know very well, that there are ſome fruits in the world which inflame the blood into fevers and phrenzies. ---- And we are told, that the *Indians* are acquainted with a certain juice, which immediately turns the perſon who drinks it into an idiot; leaving him at the ſame time in the enjoyment of his health, and all the powers of his body; ---- Now I ask, whether it is not poſſible, nay, whether it is not rational to believe, that the ſame fruit, which, in the preſent infirmity of nature, would utterly deſtroy the human conſtitution, might, in the higheſt perfection we can imagine it, at leaſt diſturb, and impair, and diſeaſe it? and whether the ſame fruit which would now inflame any man living into a fever or phrenzy, might not inflame *Adam* into a turbulence and irregularity of paſſion and appetite? and whether the ſame fluids which inflame the blood into irregularity of paſſion and appetite, may not naturally produce infection, and impair the conſtitution? alſo, whether the ſame juice, which now ſo affects the brain of an ordinary man, as to make him an idiot, might not ſo affect the brain of *Adam*, as to bring his underſtanding down to the preſent ſtandard of ordinary men? and if this be poſſible, and not abſurd to be ſuppoſed, 'tis evident the ſubſequent ignorance and corruption of human nature may clearly be accounted for upon theſe ſuppoſitions; --- nay, I had almoſt ſaid upon any one of them? for the perfection of human nature conſiſting in the dominion of reaſon over the paſſions and appetites, whatever deſtroy'd the abſoluteneſs of that dominion, whether by inflaming the paſſions, or impairing the powers of reaſon, muſt of neceſſity deſtroy the perfection of human nature; and, in conſequence of that, produce ſin, guilt, and miſery in *Adam*; and entail it upon his poſterity.

All

ALL mankind were in *Adam*.---- The knowledge of nature proves this to be true. And we well know that the infections and infirmities of the father, affect the children yet in his loins; and if the mother be equally infected, muſt, unleſs removed by proper remedies, affect their poſterity to the end of the world: ---- or, at leaſt, till the infection extinguiſhes the race affected with it. Therefore, why all mankind might not by their firſt father's ſin be reduced to the ſame condition of infirmity and corruption with himſelf, (eſpecially when the mother was equally infirm and infected) I believe no man, any way skill'd in the knowledge of nature, will ſo much as pretend to ſay. ---- And if it is not abſurd and irrational to ſuppoſe, that this might be done, certainly it can neither be abſurd or irrational to believe that it was done: eſpecially when we believe it, upon the credit of the wiſeſt, the moſt authentic, the beſt atteſted hiſtory in the whole world, except that of the goſpels; a hiſtory confirmed by the oldeſt, the moſt credible, and the moſt authentic traditions of all antiquity; and what is yet more, confirmed beyond all reaſonable doubt, by the very reaſon, and nature, and truth of things: --- and in the preſent caſe, confirmed beyond all poſſibility of doubt, by the teſtimony of all ages, and by the experience of every man living upon the face of the earth; ---- as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter.

DISSERTATION II.

Concerning the knowledge of the brute world conveyed to Adam.

ANOTHER revelation neceſſary to *Adam* in the ſtate of innocence, was the nature of the ſeveral creatures formed for his uſe. ---- And another, to be aſſured that God had given him dominion over them.

Firſt, IT was neceſſary for him to know the nature of the ſeveral creatures made for his uſe, otherwiſe 'tis impoſſible he could uſe them to any good or reaſonable purpoſe; and 'tis a neceſſary conſequence from the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, that when he beſtows any right upon any of his creatures, he ſhould endow them with the means of enjoying it; and 'tis evident, that if *Adam* was created under all the preſent infirmities and neceſſities of human nature, he muſt be miſerable for a long courſe of years; nay, probably he might periſh, before he could find out by his own ſagacity the fitneſs of the ſeveral creatures, to ſupply the ſeveral neceſſities and conveniences of human life; or, having found it, to be able, by the force of his own ſtrength and wiſdom, with no other than the aſſiſtance of his wife, to ſubdue and apply thoſe creatures to the ſeveral ends and uſes for which they were ordained by God. At leaſt it hath coſt his poſterity much pains to this purpoſe, tho' aſſiſted by numbers, and advantaged by all the inventions of art. It hath exhauſted the wiſdom of many ſucceſſive generations,

rations, to arrive at a thorough improvement and information in theſe points; and yet no man of common learning believes them to be fully attain'd to this day.---- And is it any way agreeable to the ideas we have of the divine beneficence, to believe, he would leave his innocent creatures, ſo long deſtitute of ſo many comforts and conveniences of life, or ſuffer them to pine and periſh for want of them? Mortals, ill inform'd of the benignity and perfection of the divine Being, may give up their belief to ſuch abſurdities; but, God be praiſed, Chriſtians know better things.

THE ſum of the argument is this; if *Adam* was created under the preſent infirmities and neceſſities of human nature, he muſt have been long miſerable, perhaps to the laſt moment of his life, without the knowledge of the nature and uſes of the ſeveral creatures. ---- 'Tis inconſiſtent with the juſtice and goodneſs of God, to ſuffer him to be miſerable, or periſh innocent; and therefore 'tis a neceſſary conſequence from the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, that he was inform'd of theſe points as ſoon as it was neceſſary, *i.e.* as ſoon as he was created.---- And to this end, 'tis evident, that either God muſt have endowed him with ſuch exceeding ſagacity and penetration as to diſcern the natures of all animals at firſt ſight, and then *Moſes*'s account of this matter is literally true.----Or elſe, he muſt convey this knowledge to him by an expreſs revelation. Let the adverſaries of reveal'd religion alſo take which ſide of this dilemma they like beſt.

THE next revelation neceſſary to *Adam* at this time, was, that God had given him dominion over the creatures; for to what purpoſe would it have been to him, to have known the natures of the ſeveral beings about him, and their fitneſs to miniſter to his ſatisfactions, and to ſerve the neceſſities and conveniences of his life, if he could not be aſſured at the ſame time

time that he had a right to apply them to thoſe ends? and 'tis certain that fitneſs could not infer right, *i. e.* the fitneſs in one creature to ſerve the ends of another, infers no right in that other to apply that creature to his own uſes; and all the caſuiſts upon earth will never be able to demonſtrate, that he had a right ſo much as to the milk of a cow, without an expreſs grant from God. — It was abſolutely neceſſary therefore that God Almighty ſhould give him a right to the creatures; and not only ſo, but ſhould give him dominion over them: ſuch a dominion as ſhould imply awe and ſubmiſſion in them, and authority and rule in him; otherwiſe 'tis impoſſible to ſay, why the firſt lion or tyger that met him, ſhould not at the ſame time devour him; or the firſt cow, or horſe, or elephant he attempted to tame, ſhould not gore, or trample, or tear him to pieces.

I Beseech you to conſider, what muſt the condition of a man ſent into the world in the midſt of ſo many ſavage creatures, prone and enabled to deſtroy him, if thoſe creatures were not at the ſame time reſtrained; 'tis evident, that without this, he muſt be miſerable beyond imagination; and that no man of common ſenſe would take life upon thoſe terms, even now, with all the advantage of arts and arms; to be the only man upon the globe, encompaſſed with brutes and ſavages, ready and able to devour and deſtroy him.—And much leſs would he accept of life upon the terms of being placed naked and defenceleſs in thoſe circumſtances. And 'tis as evident, that what a man of common ſenſe would not take, a being of infinite goodneſs would not give to a reaſonable creature, upon thoſe terms.—And therefore, as certain as it can be, that God is infinitely wiſe and good, ſo certain is it, that when he ſent man into the world, naked and defenceleſs, he placed him in it in full aſſurance of ſecurity from the creatures, and dominion over them. And conſequently *Moſes*'s account of this matter,

matter, in the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, is demonſtrably true; where he tells us, that as ſoon as God had declared his reſolution to make man in his own image, he decreed them dominion over all the other creatures.—And accordingly we are aſſured, that as ſoon as *Adam* and *Eve* were created, *God bleſſed them; and God ſaid unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it, and have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*—And as nothing could ſo fully ſatisfy *Adam*, that he was in full poſſeſſion of this dominion, as bringing the creatures before him, and letting him ſee his own authority, and their ſubmiſſion, (which he could not but ſee by their behaviour on that occaſion) we are aſſured from the ſcriptures that they were brought before him; and that he gave them names, which the knowledge of the *Hebrew* ſhews us to be ſignificant of their natures; from whence we infer, that God gave him alſo a clear inſight into their ſeveral characters, and qualities, and uſes, as far as was neceſſary to his well-being; and that ſuch knowledge was neceſſary to his well-being, I have already ſhewn.

BUT here it may be objected, that if *Adam* and *Eve* were ſo throughly inform'd in the nature of the creatures, how was it poſſible that the ſerpent could deceive beings of ſuch ſuperior abilities?

IN anſwer to this, I ſhall omit the various opinions of Doctors and Rabbi's on this head, and barely mention that which is moſt natural and obvious from the ſcripture.

EVE very well knew that the ſerpent, tho' ſubtil, was yet denied the uſe of reaſon and ſpeech; and therefore, when ſhe ſaw him endow'd with both, and heard him attribute theſe perfections to the virtue of the forbidden fruit, it was eaſy for her to conclude thus

thus with herſelf, that if the virtue of that fruit was ſo wonderful, as to make the ſerpent rational from brute, 'twas probable enough it might raiſe her from rational to divine; and this was ſuch a temptation as reaſon could not eaſily reſiſt, as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter.——'Tis true, this matter is related ſhortly, and, to our preſent capacities, ſomewhat obſcurely in the ſcripture; but, if we conſider, that the human underſtanding was much more perfect before the fall; and that in this perfection it was eaſy to learn the ſpeaker's thoughts from a ſhort hint, without the toil of thoſe long and laborious deductions, which our preſent dulneſs hath made neceſſary; we ſhall find that the ſerpent had no need to ſpeak one word more than he is ſaid to do on this occaſion. Nay, if he had ſpoken more, he might have defeated his deſign; by letting *Eve* ſee that he had not attain'd to all that ſagacity he pretended to, by eating the forbidden fruit. In ſhort, this conference is a ſpecimen of that ſhort ſagacious reaſoning, which human nature was capable of in its perfection. And as I am fully ſatisfied that the ſerpent had no need of ſaying one word more to *Eve* on this occaſion, than is here recorded; ſo I think it evident, that *Moſes*, in relating no more than what was ſaid, hath diſcharged the part of a faithful hiſtorian, which he would not have done, had he related one word more.

And, in order to clear this, I ſhall again repeat this poſition; that the perfection of our underſtanding in this world is knowledge by hints, or ſimple propoſitions; as the perfection of our underſtanding in the next, will be knowledge by intuition. And whoever is any way converſant in hiſtory, or hath converſed with any ſagacity himſelf, cannot but know that nothing is more common than to diſcern a whole train of thoughts by one word, —— nay, by a look,-- a ſigh, or even a motion of the head or hand. — And what hath ſo much diſtinguiſhed the abili-

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ties of Sir *Iſaac Newton*, and ſome other men of great genius to the world, as their perception of very new and remote truths, from very ſimple principles, which others, even when diſcovered, could not attain, without a long train of conſequences; at leaſt, what could raiſe their abilities ſo high in our eſteem, as to be ſatisfied they were capable of ſuch perception? And this being granted, 'tis evident that the reaſoning I have mentioned on this head, is clearly deducible from the converſation between the ſerpent and the woman, mentioned on this occaſion; as you may read in the third chapter of *Geneſis:* eſpecially when we conſider the clear connection between this converſation and the precedent command of abſtinence given by God, which made an ampler account of this matter leſs neceſſary; ——the words are as follow; *And he ſaid unto the woman, Yea, hath God ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the Garden?* ——Or rather, as it is in the original, *Yea, becauſe God hath ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman ſaid unto the ſerpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midſt of the garden, God hath ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of it, neither ſhall ye touch it, leſt ye die. —And the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die; becauſe God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.*

Now whoever attends carefully to theſe words, will find theſe three points clearly contain'd in them:

Firſt, That the ſerpent had ſome way or other invited *Eve* to eat of that fruit, probably by expreſſing great rapture and tranſport upon taſting it himſelf, and that notwithſtanding ſhe refuſed ſo much as to

to touch it; and ſignified the reaſon of her refuſal, becauſe it was forbidden under pain of death.

Secondly, THAT he ridicules that reaſon, and aſſigns another reaſon.

AND *Thirdly*, that ſhe is confirmed in the truth of that other reaſon, from the ſerpent's experiment, and ſo eats the fruit.

Firſt, IT appears that the ſerpent had ſome way or other invited *Eve* to eat of that fruit, and that notwithſtanding ſhe refuſed ſo much as to touch it. All this is plainly implied in the ſerpent's firſt queſtion; —*Yea, becauſe God hath ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of every tree in the garden?* — Now this queſtion plainly implies a reproach upon a refuſal; and ſuch a reproach plainly implies an application made and rejected, — For what can be clearer than that the meaning of theſe words is plainly this? — What, you refuſe to eat of this tree, becauſe God hath not allow'd you to eat the fruit of the trees in the garden.——Now, that this is the meaning of the ſerpent's words, is evident from *Eve*'s reply, wherein ſhe corrects the reaſon aſſign'd by the ſerpent, and aſſigns the true reaſon of her refuſal. For this reply evidently implies theſe four things.

Firſt, THAT application had been made to her to eat that fruit.

Secondly, THAT ſhe refuſed ſo much as to touch it, and aſſigned the reaſon of that refuſal; becauſe God had forbidden it.

Thirdly, THAT the ſerpent pretended to miſtake that reaſon.

AND

And *fourthly*, That ſhe corrects his pretended miſtake, and aſſigns the true reaſon of her refuſal; and all theſe inferences are founded upon this plain axiom.

A reply correcting the wrong reaſon of a refuſal aſſigned by the adverſary, and aſſigning the right, —implies theſe four things.—— 1ſt, *That an application was made.* — 2dly, *That it was rejected for a certain reaſon.* — 3dly, *That this reaſon was affectedly or ignorantly miſtaken by the adverſary.*—— And 4thly, *That this miſtake was corrected in the reply, and the true reaſon aſſigned.*

And foraſmuch as there is a plain inſinuation againſt the goodneſs of God, in the ſerpent's queſtion; as if God had made ſomething which was not good; or, at leaſt, had withheld ſomething that was good, nay, which was the beſt of all the good things he had made, from them, and conſequently was not ſo bountiful and beneficent, as they might think him; ſhe in her anſwer vindicates the goodneſs of God; and adds the reaſon of his forbidding them that fruit, ——*viz. leſt ye die*, i. e. becauſe it would certainly be deſtructive to them; ſhe knew very well that the fruit might be good, and anſwer many excellent ends of providence, and yet be deſtructive to them. Now that apprehenſion the tempter ridicules, by affirming, in an inſolent irony, and in the direct contradiction of God's own words, *Ye ſhall not ſurely die*; and then adds what he would inſinuate to be the true reaſon of God's prohibition, —*becauſe God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil*, that was the reaſon that God forbid you to eat it.

Now the difficulty here, is, how the tempter could take upon him to pronounce this ſo peremptorily, — or why *Eve* ſhould believe him when he did?

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THE anſwer to this is obvious. *Eve* ſaw him eat the fruit, as I ſhall ſhew you immediately; and that he eat it to his great advantage, and not to his deſtruction; and therefore it was probable ſhe might do ſo too.

NOW upon ſuppoſition that *Eve* ſaw him eat it, without any ill conſequence, the queſtion which would then naturally ariſe in her mind, was this; If this fruit is not deſtructive to life, as 'tis plain from the ſerpent that it is not, why did God forbid us to eat it? — To this doubt, which it was eaſy for the ſerpent to foreſee would ariſe in her mind, and to obſerve by her countenance that it had ariſen there, he gives a plain and plauſible anſwer; — *Becauſe*, ſays he, (for ſo the word is in the *Hebrew*; *becauſe*) *God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes ſhall be opened, and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* —— As if he had ſaid, You are at a loſs to know, if this tree is not deſtructive, why God hath forbid you to eat it.——The anſwer is plain; he forbad you, becauſe he knew that your eating it would raiſe you up to the perfections of his own nature.

NOW that *Eve* was confirmed in the truth of this reaſon by the ſerpent's experiment, appears plainly from the words immediately following,——which are theſe, *And when the woman ſaw that the tree was good for food,--- and that it was pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make one wiſe, ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.* Now from theſe words I clearly conclude, that *Eve* ſaw the ſerpent eat the forbidden fruit, and aſcribed his ſpeech and knowledge to the eating of it; -----and this concluſion I found upon this plain axiom.

WHOEVER *declares a certain knowledge of a truth which can only be had by experiment, declares a certain know-*

knowledge that that experiment was made.-----Now *Eve* could plainly know from her ſenſes, that the fruit was deſirable to the eye, but it was impoſſible ſhe could know that it was good for food but from the example and experiment of the ſerpent. It was alſo impoſſible ſhe could know that it was deſirable to make wiſe, but by the example of the ſerpent; whom ſhe ſaw from a brute become a rational and vocal creature, as ſhe thought by eating that fruit.---- The text ſays, ſhe *ſaw it was good for food, and that it was deſirable to make wiſe.* And ſeeing, does not imply conjecture or belief, but certain knowledge-----knowledge founded upon evidence and proof; ſuch proof as ſhe had then before her eyes.-----And when once we are ſure that ſhe had this proof, as 'tis evident ſhe had, the whole conference between her and the ſerpent is as rational and intelligible, as any thing in the whole ſcriptures.

BUT here it is objected, that *Eve* expreſſes no ſuch thing as fear or ſurprize on ſo ſtrange an event, as that of a brute's ſpeaking to her, which naturally ſhould happen; and conſequently this relation is incredible on that account.

IN anſwer to this, I beſeech theſe objectors ſeriouſly to reflect, whether human nature is now in ſuch native perfection, as to be able to anſwer and attain the true ends of ſuch a being as man is; that it is not now in ſuch perfection, needs little ſagacity to ſee, or ingenuity to own; that it was ſo in its original formation, no way misbecomes the beſt philoſophy to believe; foraſmuch as it is apparently a neceſſary conſequence from the infinite wiſdom and goodneſs of God. Now 'tis evident, that, in ſuch a ſtate, reaſon muſt enjoy a calm dominion; and conſequently, that there was no room for thoſe ſudden ſtarts of imagination, or thoſe ſudden tumults, agitations, failures, and ſtagnations of the blood and ſpirits,

now incident to human nature; and therefore *Eve* was incapable of fear or ſurprize from ſuch accidents as would diſquiet the beſt of her poſterity.----This objection then is ſo far from prejudicing the truth of the *Moſaic* hiſtory, that, to me, I own, 'tis a ſtrong preſumption in its favour.

BUT after all, if this objection has yet any weight with my reader, I beſeech him to conſider what there is in this philoſophic ſerenity of our firſt parent, (ſuppoſing the whole of her conduct on this occaſion fully related to us) ſo far exceeding the ſerenity of *Fabricius*, upon the ſudden appearance and cry of the elephant contrived by *Pyrrhus* to diſcompoſe him; or the ſteddineſs of *Brutus* upon the appearance of his evil genius?----and yet, I believe, *Plutarch* no way ſuffers in his credit, as an hiſtorian, by the relation of thoſe events; at leaſt, had he related thoſe ſurprizing accidents, without ſaying one word of what effects they had upon the paſſions of the perſons concern'd, his relations had certainly been liable to no imputation of incredibility, or even improbability upon that account.

NOW let the wiſeſt of mankind imagine himſelf in *Eve*'s condition, I would ask ſuch a one, If a brute ſhould accoſt him with the ſame power of ſpeech, and ſtrength of reaſon, and ſhould aſcribe both to the ſame cauſe that the ſerpent did, whether ſo powerful a temptation would not, in all probability, influence him to the ſame tranſgreſſion? If then, there be nothing abſurd, or impoſſible, or unphiloſophical, in ſuppoſing that the organs of a brute could be ſo acted by the influence of a ſuperior intelligence, as there evidently is not; then is there plainly nothing abſurd, impoſſible, or incredible in this whole account of the conference between *Eve* and the ſerpent; nay, ſo far otherwiſe, that, as it is now explain'd, I will be bold

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to ſay, 'tis the moſt rational ſcheme of deception, and the beſt fitted to work its end, that the ſubtileſt of all created ſpirits can be conceived capable of deviſing on the occaſion; ----- nay more, that the whole of this account is incomparably more agreeable to reaſon and philoſophy, and, conſequently, more credible, than any one article of the *Freethinker*'s faith, as it is contradiſtinguiſh'd from the *Chriſtians*.

DISSERTATION III.

Of the knowledge of marriage given to Adam.

I PROCEED now to conſider another revelation neceſſary to *Adam* in a ſtate of innocence; and that was a revelation of marriage according to the law of nature; or, in other words, that God had ordained, that one man ſhould be inſeparably united to one woman.

NOW that this knowledge was neceſſary to *Adam*, I believe the adverſaries of revelation will not deny; when they conſider, that this inſeparable union of one man with one woman in marriage, is a law of nature, as I ſhall hereafter prove it to be; and they themſelves own that the knowledge of the law of nature is neceſſary, in order to a due diſcharge of duty. Now that *Adam* knew this to be ſuch, is evident from theſe words in the ſecond chapter of *Geneſis*, pronounced by him at the inſtant that God gave the woman unto him, *v.* 23. *And* Adam *ſaid, This is now bone of my bones, and fleſh of my fleſh; ſhe ſhall be called Woman, becauſe ſhe was taken out of man.* 24. *Therefore ſhall a man leave his father and his mother, and ſhall cleave unto his wife, and they ſhall be one fleſh.*

THAT *Adam* ſhould have a perfect idea of father and mother, before there was any ſuch thing as a father or a mother in the world,----ſhould have clear ideas of the affection and endearment ariſing from that Relation, and yet ſhould ſee clearly that the affection and endearment ariſing from marriage ſhould yet get the better of theſe ties, ſo as to attach a man nearer to a ſtranger taken to his breaſt, than to thoſe very parents whoſe blood ran in his veins, and who gave him his very life; is a problem which will puzzle all the infidels of the world to explain in a natural way; or to account for from any ſuppoſition of ſagacity or penetration in the human mind, or from any principle whatſoever but expreſs revelation; at leaſt if the received doctrines of philoſophy be true, that the ſenſes are the inlets of ideas, and that we can have no ideas without objects; that the mind, tho' it can compare and combine, yet cannot create ideas of any kind; nor form any, but from the perceptions of its own operations, and the objects of ſenſe. Now ideas of parents and children, and the relation ariſing from thence, when there was no ſuch thing as parents or children in the world, were to *Adam* plainly ideas without objects; ideas of parental affection in a man who never had been a parent, nor ever ſeen the effects of that affection in another; ideas alſo of filial affection in one who never had been a ſon, of contending with that affection, of conquering it, and preferring another to it, are perceptions which it was impoſſible *Adam* could naturally have, from perceiving the operations of his own mind; becauſe it is impoſſible his mind could naturally operate in that manner; and therefore, ſince it is plain that he had theſe ideas, and had them not from nature, 'tis evident he muſt have them from revelation.

AGAIN, How was it poſſible for *Adam* to know, that God Almighty intended that the union of man and wife ſhould be perpetual, ſhould be as laſting and in-

inſeparable as the union of parts in the ſame body, which nothing but death or deſtruction can ſeparate? for ſo theſe words plainly ſignify, *and they ſhall be one fleſh.*

He knew indeed that *Eve* and he were literally one fleſh; but he knew at the ſame time, that ſucceeding pairs ſhould not be ſo; that wives were to be provided for all other men in a natural way; this is evident from theſe words, *Therefore ſhall a man leave his father and his mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife*; and yet how he ſhould take upon him to affirm, that their union with their husbands ſhould be as inſeparable, by the appointment of God, in the nature of things, as if they were actually one fleſh, is impoſſible to be accounted for in a natural way.

We all know that property was eſtabliſhed in the world as a fence againſt the corruption of human nature, and therefore it is rational to believe, that in a ſtate of innocence there would have been a community of all the common conveniencies and neceſſaries of life: nor could reaſon antecedently demonſtrate a neceſſity of eſtabliſhing a ſtrict invariable property in this inſtance above any other; eſpecially when the ends of ſociety might in many caſes be ſeemingly better anſwered, by an allowance of more liberty in this point; as in the caſe of accidental barrenneſs from too great a difference of temperament in the married pair, —— or any accidental defect happening after marriage in either party.——Now the ends of marriage would in appearance be better anſwered, by leaving either or both parties at liberty in theſe caſes to make another choice; eſpecially at a time when the perfection of human reaſon, and rectitude of the will, precluded all danger of that liberty's being abuſed. ——And therefore 'tis evident, that *Adam* could not know that God Almighty had thus ordained, otherwiſe than by an expreſs revelation.——It was impoſſible for him to know,

without revelation, in what proportion his offſpring of each ſex would be propagated: or that the number of each ſhould for ever bear a certain determinate proportion to one another, as it certainly does; and that that proportion would demonſtrate the juſtice and the neceſſity of one man's being allowed a property in no more than one woman; and that infinite evils would accrue to mankind in their fallen condition, as it is evident there would, from eſtabliſhing this property only for a limited time; or making the continuance of it arbitrary, or determinable at the diſcretion of either or both parties; and ſince it was abſolutely impoſſible for *Adam* to know all this, (for in truth nothing leſs than infinite wiſdom could know it,) 'tis evident he could not take upon him to pronounce, that this ſhould be the ſtate of marriage, but by expreſs revelation from God; and this reaſoning clearly confirms the truth of our Saviour's explication of this paſſage in the 19th chapter of St. *Matthew*'s goſpel, 4th, 5th, and 6th verſes, where he tells us, that the words pronounced by *Adam* on this occaſion, where the declaration of God himſelf; ------ *And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them in the beginning, made them male and female? and ſaid, For this cauſe ſhall a man leave father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife, and they twain ſhall be one fleſh.* Here you find, that the declaration aſcribed by *Moſes* to *Adam*, is aſcribed by Chriſt to God; from whence it is evident, that the declaration which *Adam* made on this occaſion, was in conſequence of an expreſs revelation from God. ------- Which was the thing to be proved. And here 'tis well worth obſerving, that if we ſuppoſe *Adam* uninform'd by God in the reaſon of that inſeparable union of one man with one woman in marriage, which he had then ordained,

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this appointment was, with regard to *Adam*, a mere poſitive inſtitution; and, I believe, no one imagines that it was not ſo regarded by his ſons for ſix thouſand years: and yet in reality it was (and is now demonſtrated to be) a law of nature; and ſhall we yet dare to pronounce that God has no right to bind ſuch reaſonable clear-ſighted creatures as we are, by inſtitutions apparently poſitive?

DISSERTATION IV.

Of the skill of language infus'd into Adam.

HAVING demonſtrated the neceſſity of a revelation to be made to *Adam* in relation to marriage, I proceed to ſhew you, that another revelation was alſo neceſſary to him in the ſtate of innocence; And that is, a revelation of language.

THAT God made man a ſociable creature, does not need to be proved; and that when he made him ſuch, he with-held nothing from him that was in any wiſe neceſſary to his well-being in ſociety, is a clear conſequence from the wiſdom and goodneſs of God; and if he with-held nothing any way neceſſary to his well-being, much leſs would he withhold from him that which is the inſtrument of the greateſt happineſs a reaſonable creature is capable of in this world.—If the Lord God made *Adam a help meet for him*, becauſe *it was not good for man to be alone*, can we imagine he would leave him unfurniſhed of the means to make that help uſeful and delightful to him? If it was not good for him to be alone, certainly neither was it good for him to have a companion, to whom he could not readily communicate his thoughts; with whom he

could neither eaſe his anxieties, nor divide, or double his joys,----by a kind, a friendly, a reaſonable, a religious converſation; and how he could do this in any degree of perfection, or to any height of rational happineſs, is utterly inconceivable without the uſe of ſpeech.

Now that men have not the uſe of ſpeech from nature, is an undeniable truth.—*Herodotus*, indeed, tells us of an *Ægyptian* king, who cauſed two children to be educated, under a ſtrict injunction to their keeper, that they ſhould never hear a human voice; in order to learn from thence, which was the oldeſt language; and that after two years, they both pronounced the word *beccos* at the ſame time; which happened to ſignify bread in the *Phrygian* language. This conduct of the *Ægyptian* king was evidently abſurd; for if he made any rational enquiry by this experiment, it ſhould be this,----whether there was any ſuch thing as a language of nature? For there could be no reaſon why an untaught child ſhould ſpeak the oldeſt, more than the lateſt language, if that oldeſt were not the language of nature; and if it was, not only that, but every other child, would ſpeak it untaught; nay, all mankind would of neceſſity ſpeak that language, and no other; at leaſt, they would of neceſſity ſpeak that, tho' they had learn'd others; and every man upon the face of the earth, would be intelligible to every other, when he ſpoke it.-----Becauſe if ſounds had any natural force to expreſs things, 'tis impoſſible the meaning of them could ever be doubtful, even at the firſt hearing; and whereas the contrary to this is undeniably the truth; and there is no relation between ſounds and things; and words ſignify things, from no other than the arbitrary agreement of men; 'tis evident, that language is not natural, but inſtituted; and to ſuppoſe *Adam* not endowed with the knowledge and uſe of it, is to ſuppoſe him form'd in a much worſe condition than the birds of the air, or the beaſts of the field;

field; who have all natural means of communicating their wants and desires, and what other ideas are necessary to be communicated for their mutual aid and well-being, by uniform regular sounds, immediately and equally intelligible to the whole species.

And that the inferior animals have not the advantage of these sounds from instruction, or the example of their parents, is evident; because they are uniformly endowed with them, in all regions, and at all distances from any of their own species; and therefore, 'tis evident, they have their several languages, such as they are, by instinct; that is, either immediately from the divine influence, or from some establishment of infinite wisdom in their formation: or, in other words, that they are taught of God.-----And certainly none will be so absurd as to imagine, that God was less careful in the formation of man, or furnished them less perfectly, for all the ends of society, than he furnished the fowls of the air, or the beasts of the field; God forbid!

If it be said, That the human organs being admirably fitted for the formation of articulate sounds: these, with the help of reason, might in time lead men to the use of language; I own it imaginable that they might; but still, till that end were attained in perfection, which possibly might not be in a series of many generations, it must be own'd that brutes were better dealt by, and could better attain all the ends of their creation. ---- And if that be absurd to be supposed, certainly the other is not less absurd to be believed. Nay, I think it justly doubtful, whether, without inspiration from God in this point, man could ever attain the true ends of his being; at least, if we may judge in this case, by the example of those nations, who, being destitute of the advantages of a perfect language, are, in all probability, from the misfortune

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of that ſole defect, ſunk into the loweſt condition of barbariſm and brutality.

AND as to the perfection in which the human organs are framed and fitted for the formation of articulate ſounds, this is clearly an argument for believing that God immediately bleſſed man with the uſe of ſpeech; and gave him wherewithal to exert thoſe organs to their proper ends: for this is ſurely as credible, as that when he gave him an appetite for food, and proper organs to eat and to digeſt it, he did not leave him to ſeek painfully for a neceſſary ſupply, (till his offence had made ſuch a ſearch his curſe and puniſhment) but placed him at once in the midſt of abundant plenty.

THE conſequence from all which, is, that the perfection and felicity of man, and the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, neceſſarily required, that *Adam* ſhould be ſupernaturally endowed with the knowledge and uſe of language.---- And therefore, as certain as it can be, that man was made perfect and happy, and that God is wiſe and good; ſo certain is it, that when *Adam* and *Eve* were formed, they were immediately enabled by God to converſe and communicate their thoughts, in all the perfection of language neceſſary to all the ends of their creation.

AND as this was the conduct moſt becoming the goodneſs of God; ſo we are aſſured from *Moſes*, that it was that to which his infinite wiſdom determined him: for we find that *Adam* gave names to all the creatures before *Eve* was formed; and conſequently, before neceſſity taught him the uſe of ſpeech.

AND thus, having proved, in a way perfectly demonſtrative to myſelf, and, I hope, ſatisfactory to you, that, at leaſt, five revelations were abſolutely neceſſary to *Adam* in a ſtate of innocence and perfection;

I think, I may fairly pronounce, that the main doctrine of our adverſaries is abſolutely overthrown, even upon their own principles; for ſuppoſing man to be now in as much perfection, as he was originally formed in, (which I ſhall hereafter demonſtrate that he is not) yet, if I have ſhewn that with all the abilities he has now, he could not attain to the true end of his being, unaſſiſted by God; and our adverſaries own, that if he could not, he muſt be worſe dealt by than the beaſts that periſh; and affirm at the ſame time, that the wiſdom and goodneſs of God won't allow this to be believed; it follows, upon their own principles, that if revelation was neceſſary, God certainly gave it.--- Now I have proved revelation to be neceſſary to man, even on ſuppoſition of his being formed in the utmoſt perfection his nature is capable of; and ſurely 'tis a clear conſequence from this, that it muſt be more neceſſary, in proportion as he is found to fall ſhort of that perfection: for otherwiſe 'twould follow, that tho' the advice and skill of a phyſician was indeed neceſſary in perfect health, for the regimen and preſervation of it, yet there was no ſort of need of it, in ſickneſs.

THAT human nature wanted the aſſiſtance of God, in the utmoſt perfection it can be imagin'd capable of, I have already proved.--- Now waving the queſtion, whether it ever was in more perfection than it is now, which ſhall be examined on another occaſion; that human nature is at this time in all the perfection it is capable of, I believe no man of common ſenſe will pretend to affirm; and if it is not, why it may not yet want more aſſiſtance from God, will ſurely be hard to ſay; unleſs God has already given it all the aſſiſtance he could give; and if he hath done ſo, 'tis a demonſtration that he hath more than once inſtructed, exhorted, admoniſh'd, reproved, and puniſhed mankind; becauſe 'tis certain that he could do all this, and that they have more than once needed the

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interpoſition of God to all theſe purpoſes: unleſs it be ſuppoſed, that mankind are utterly incapable of improvement or amendment; of being deterred from evil, or drawn to good: and I ſhould be very ſorry to have this ſuppoſed, even for the ſake of our adverſaries.

WHEREAS then the main principle upon which the arguments of our adverſaries are founded, is utterly overthrown, by demonſtrating the neceſſity of revelation, in the utmoſt ſuppoſed perfection of human nature; our controverſy with them might properly enough conclude here, if I did not hope the continuance of it, may, in the end, have better effects than the confuſion of obſtinacy and perverſeneſs; ---- may, in ſome meaſure, vindicate the ways of God with men; ---- may, by God's aſſiſtance, inform the ignorant, ſatisfy the doubtful, and confirm the faithful; and, if not convince, yet, at leaſt, ſubdue the infidel; and reduce him to the modeſty of enjoying his ignorance in the humility of ſilence.

RATIONAL doubts, propoſed with candour, and debated with calmneſs, have unqueſtionably the cleareſt claim to our moſt ſerious attention; as well as to our beſt endeavours of clear and rational ſolutions; but where is the human, or even the chriſtian patience that can bear with the inſolence of error? ---- To hear the moſt rational conduct human nature is capable of, inſulted by the moſt irrational; to ſee men triumph on the ſide of vice, againſt the intereſts of virtue; on the ſide of error, againſt the evidence of truth; with the violence of obſtinacy, and blindneſs, and abſurdity, againſt the light and majeſty of wiſdom: is ſuch an outrage upon common decency, as well as common ſenſe, as no man, who hath the intereſt of virtue, the honour of God, or the good of mankind at heart, is able, is obliged to bear, without indignation. ---- I ſpeak this not only as an apo-

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logy for troubling the chriſtian reader with recounting and confuting the errors of our adverſaries; ---- but alſo as an apology, for whatever vehemence may hereafter fall from me, in proſecution of theſe bold (not gigantick) invaders of heaven.

AND now, having conſidered the ſeveral revelations given to mankind before the fall, --- my method next leads me to conſider, the ſeveral revelations given after the fall.

DISSERTATION V.

Of the revelations which immediately follow'd the fall.

BEFORE I proceed upon this point, it will be proper to obſerve, that the common objection to this whole account of the fall, is its obſcurity. Now if that obſcurity neceſſarily ariſes from the truth of the relation, *i.e.* from relating that tranſaction as it really was; then this objection will be ſo far from being a prejudice to revelation, that it muſt greatly tend to confirm it. Now, what reaſon can be conceiv'd, why *Moſes*, who is on other occaſions the plaineſt, moſt natural, moſt intelligible hiſtorian in the world, ſhould be ſo very obſcure in this; unleſs it were, that truth requir'd it? For if we ſuppoſe him left to his own diſcretion, or the liberty of his own invention upon the point, can we imagine that a Man of his genius could not give us a more explicit, intelligible account of this matter? there is no queſtion but he could. If therefore we conſider *Moſes* on this occaſion, neither as a philoſopher, nor commentator, but barely as an hiſtorian: the true way to judge whether he

he acted faithfully in that character, is, to enquire, whether, from the nature of the thing, a converſation in that ſtate of things, between three ſuch intelligent beings as are here introduc'd, muſt not of neceſſity be obſcure to us, in this ſtate, and at this diſtance.

HUMAN nature is generally ſuppoſed to have been then in perfection; at leaſt, *Adam* muſt be allow'd ſufficiently acquainted with his own condition; which no man will pretend to know with equal perſpicuity at this diſtance: and as the knowledge of language was inſpir'd by Almighty God, *Adam* and *Eve* muſt neceſſarily be ſuppoſed fully informed of all the powers and idioms of a tongue ſo taught. Let it be conſidered then, that the converſations here related, are between Almighty God, man ſuppoſed in perfection, (at leaſt, more intelligent in the point in queſtion, than any man can now be ſuppoſed) and another being under the diſguiſe of a brute, ſubtle and intelligent beyond man, even in perfection. Now all converſation muſt, in proportion to the ſuperior intelligence of the beings concerned, be obſcure to beings of leſs intelligence; eſpecially, if it turns upon points in which thoſe beings of inferior intelligence, are not ſufficiently informed.

IF three of the beſt mathematicians of the age were to converſe but one minute, upon ſome important point of that ſcience: or three able philoſophers upon ſome principle of natural knowledge, then newly diſcovered; the relation of that converſation would of neceſſity be obſcure to all perſons unskill'd in the ſubject of it: but ſuppoſing theſe ſame perſons, to attain, after ſome time, to a competent knowledge of the point treated upon: would the obſcurity, in which the hiſtorian related it, be any prejudice either to his veracity or abilities, in the opinion of thoſe perſons?

perſons? Quite otherwiſe; it would be a demonſtration of his veracity at leaſt, if not of his skill. In like manner, if the converſations and ſentences relating to the fall, can, with much ſtudy, and with the advantage of all thoſe improvements in knowledge, to which mankind are arrived, be now made more intelligible to us: the obſcurity, in which they have hitherto been involv'd, will be ſo far from prejudicing the truth of the *Moſaic* relation, that it will be a ſtrong, additional argument of the writer's fidelity and veracity.

NOW whether they are made more intelligible in the ſubſequent diſſertations, the reader will beſt judge.

THE firſt revelations which we meet with after the fall, are in the third chapter of *Geneſis*, at the 14th and the following verſes; where God, upon examining into the offence of our firſt parents, pronounces ſentence upon the ſeveral criminals concern'd in it, in the following manner:

14. AND *the Lord God ſaid unto the ſerpent, Becauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed above all cattel, and above every beaſt of the field: upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life;*

15. AND *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.*

16. UNTO *the woman he ſaid, I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow, and thy conception; in ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children; and thy deſire ſhall be to thy husband, and he ſhall rule over thee.*

17. AND

17. AND *unto Adam he ſaid, Becauſe thou haſt hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it; curſed is the ground for thy ſake; in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.*

18. THORNS *alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth unto thee, and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field.*

19. IN *the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken: for duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.*

Obſervations upon the ſentences pronounced on *Adam* and *Eve.*

HERE is a terrible denunciation of toil, and miſery, and death, upon two creatures, who being inur'd to nothing, and form'd for nothing, but happineſs, muſt feel infinitely more horror from ſuch a ſentence, than we, who are now well acquainted with theſe great enemies of our nature, (familiar with death, intimate with miſery, and *born to ſorrow as the ſparks fly upward,*) can have any notion of. The whole creation curſt around 'em, and on their account; and they, for that very reaſon, more accurſt in the midſt of it! This is ſuch an image of complicated and accumulated diſtreſs, as were utterly inſupportable even to innocence; and much more to guilt. And therefore, if ever man needed a revelation of mercy, 'twas certainly at this black and diſmal moment: which, if not relieved with ſome beam of hope, muſt of neceſſity have carried them both quick to perdition.

THE majeſty of God, array'd in all the terrors of juſtice, of juſtice unallay'd by mercy, is evidently no object of religious adoration, to ſinners: love, and hope, and confidence, are eſſential ingredients of

of that glorious office; and without theſe, experience aſſures us, that religion quickly concludes in diſtraction and deſpair. And if religion once fail'd amidſt the miſeries of mortality, now denounced upon our firſt parents, 'tis certain their next rational wiſh muſt be, that life ſhould do ſo too.

'Tis evident therefore, that both religion and nature muſt ſink in this exigence, unſupported by ſome ſtay of rational hope. They had loſt every thing by their ſin; their perfection, their innocence, the favour of God, and their original felicity: and therefore 'tis evident, that no hope could be a ſufficient ſtay, could afford them any degree of rational ſupport, in this exigence: but a ſtrong and well-grounded aſſurance of recovering what they had loſt: and 'tis as evident, that no ray of rational hope, and much leſs of any ſolid aſſurance, ſhines thro' all this revelation, unleſs in the ſentence of the ſerpent: and, if that means no more than the letter of it ſeems to import, there is certainly no rational confidence or conſolation to be drawn from that. For what conſolation could it be to *Adam* to know (tho' the ſentence is alſo true in this ſenſe) that his poſterity would hate ſerpents, and ſerpents them? That they ſhould ſometimes have their heels hurt by that hateful animal; and, in return, ſhould ſometimes trample thoſe vile creatures to death? *Adam* muſt be fallen indeed, fallen below the laſt degree of common ſenſe, to derive any degree of ſatisfaction or ſupport from this ſenſe of the words. And therefore 'tis evident, he muſt endeavour to derive his hopes from ſome other interpretation of them; and he was ſufficiently juſtified in doing ſo. For he was told, that *his ſeed ſhould bruiſe that* very *ſerpent's head*. If that meant no more than vengeance upon the ſerpent; what hinder'd him from taking it? If vengeance has any good in it, cer-

The ſentence paſs'd upon the ſerpent, a rational foundation of hope to *Adam*.

tainly the more ſpeedy, and the more effectual, the better. And what reaſon was there to believe, that any of his ſons would be in a better condition to effect this, than himſelf? Or where ſhould they be ſure to find this individual creature, when they would effect it? 'Tis evident therefore, that he could ſee no reaſon in the world, why this puniſhment ſhould be referred to any of his poſterity, but this only; that ſome of his poſterity would be enabled to execute that ſentence, in ſome other ſenſe than he himſelf could. And ſurely, if the words of the ſentence did not, upon a due enquiry, give a ſufficient foundation for ſuch an hope, neither would God have deliver'd his ſentence in ſuch a manner; nor ſo wiſe a man as *Moſes*, been ſo careful to convey an unmeaning, unintelligible ſentence to poſterity. For that *Moſes* was a great and a wiſe man, eminent for depth of ſenſe, as well as dignity and perſpicuity of ſtyle, no eminent or enlarg'd genius ever yet denied, or doubted. And therefore, even in honour to ſo great an authority, we ſhould endeavour to find out ſome better meaning under the veil of thoſe words.

And in order to conduct us in this ſearch, we muſt remember that the earlieſt method of inſtructing mankind, in all ſublime and important truths, was by alluſions to, and metaphors drawn from ſenſible things: and as this is the earlieſt, ſo is it alſo the eaſieſt, method of inſtruction, becauſe it ſpeaks to the underſtanding, by the ſenſes; which is at all times the ſureſt method of conveying knowledge to the mind; and was, till later refinements introduc'd abſtractions, and univerſal ideas, the only poſſible method of inſtructing to any purpoſe. Nay, ſome degree of this, is abſolutely neceſſary at this day: nor can the moſt refined abſtractions of quantity and power, be conveyed to us, without the aſſiſtance of ſenſible ſymbols; ſuch as, figures, lines, and letters. And certainly ſuch ſymbols, as have an evident analogy

gy to the things ſignified, are more intelligible and inſtructive, than any arbitrary or artificial ſigns, or characters, can be. Now, this being premis'd, I will venture to affirm, that, if *Adam* and *Eve* are allow'd to have any degree of good underſtanding, (and there is good reaſon to believe they had, at leaſt, as good as any of their poſterity) they could not but clearly ſee a far higher and nobler meaning, in the ſentence denounced againſt the ſerpent, than the words ſeem at firſt ſight to import. And to lead them more clearly to this way of thinking, 'tis ſufficiently apparent, that they ſaw ſome vengeance immediately executed by Almighty God upon that creature; and that this vengeance was to them a ſignificant emblem of that final overthrow, which he was one day to ſuffer from the ſeed of the woman. St. *Paul*, in the eighth chapter of his epiſtle to the *Romans*, gives us plainly to underſtand, that all the creatures were curſt in the fall: nay, 'tis evident, that the creatures muſt be affected by the curſe denounced upon the earth; and that the curſe of the other creatures is plainly implied in that of the ſerpent. For when God ſays to him, *Thou art curſed above all cattel, and above every beaſt of the field*, what can be clearer, than that the meaning of theſe words is this: that tho' the other creatures of the earth were curſt in ſome meaſure, yet the ſerpent was more ſignally curſt than any of them. Now, being curſt, plainly implies being ſome way or other reduc'd to a worſe condition; and therefore his (the ſerpent) being curſt in a more remarkable manner, muſt certainly ſignify, his being reduc'd to a remarkably worſe condition than he was in before. And what that reduction might be, ſeems ſufficiently hinted in the following words; *Upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life.* Now theſe words are plainly a denunciation of puniſhment; and ſufficiently imply the very execution of that curſe upon him. But ſurely, if the ſerpent was originally form'd

to go upon his belly, and to eat duſt, his continuing in that condition in which God had created him, could be no puniſhment. And therefore, either theſe words have no meaning at all, (which it would be both abſurd and blaſphemous to ſuppoſe) or elſe they muſt mean his being reduc'd, from that moment, to ſome lower and more abject condition, than that in which he was created.

AND 'tis evident, that in fact he is in a much lower, a more abject, a more hateful, a more curſt condition, than any other beaſt of the field; leſs fitted for happineſs in that element to which he is doom'd; deſtitute of every limb, every beauty of proportion, and every perfection of every kind, that can render the other creatures of the earth either amiable or excellent! hateful and noxious to the whole brute world, and yet more remarkably ſo to man their maſter!

AND what lower, more abject, or more deteſtable life can be imagin'd than this? Reduced to the vileſt condition of the vileſt worm of the earth; reduced, as near as can be imagin'd, to the very figure and imperfection of an embryo.

PLINY indeed mentions a report, which he had heard, of a kind of ſerpents with feet; but *Ariſtotle* diſcredits this opinion: (tho' a late * writer affirms himſelf, to have ſeen ſuch animals in *Grand-Cairo.*) *Herodotus* tells, of ſome winged ſerpents that fly annually from *Arabia* to *Egypt*; and later obſervations have diſcovered ſome winged and bright ſhining ſerpents in the eaſtern and ſouthern parts of the world: and there is alſo mention made of ſome of the ſame ſpecies in *Iſaiah*, and in the book of *Numbers*. But yet every one of theſe eat duſt, and crawl upon the earth; and probably theſe are permitted by Almighty God

* Vide *Blunt's* Voyage to the *Levant*, &c.

to

to retain, even yet, ſome ſmall remains of their original luſtre and perfection, to give us ſome idea of that glory in which they were created, and from which the curſe of God hath thrown them down.

BUT here it may be ask'd, How this ſuppoſed diminution of the ſerpent's glory could be of any uſe to *Adam*? I anſwer, Many ways. For *1ſt*, the ſerpent boaſted to *Eve*, that he had acquired new excellence and perfection by eating the forbidden fruit; nor was it obſcurely inſinuated, that this was the pure vertue of that fruit; independent of the power of God; and that it would have a proportionable effect on them alſo: *God knoweth*, ſays he, *that in the day ye eat thereof, ye ſhall be as gods*. Now nothing could ſo effectually confute this vain boaſt, and wicked inſinuation, as letting *Adam* and *Eve* ſee, that imperfection, and loſs of excellence, was the only certain conſequence of his deluſion, and oppoſition to the will of God.

MORE than this, 'tis not improbable that, without the example of divine vengeance on the ſerpent, *Adam* and *Eve* would be apt to flatter themſelves (as many of their poſterity profanely do at this day) that God Almighty would not be ſo ſevere upon them, for eating an apple, little conſidering, that the eaſineſs of the reſtraint greatly added to the guilt of diſobedience. And therefore nothing could more effectually convince them of the heinouſneſs of their guilt, and the certainty of divine vengeance due to it, than the immediate puniſhment of that creatute, which was no more than the mere inſtrument of evil. It was eaſy for them to infer, *if the mere inſtrument of evil is thus puniſhed, what will become of the real authors and actors*?

AND beſides all this, doubtleſs it was ſome conſolation, as well as matter of much inſtruction, to *Adam*, to ſee that glorious inſtrument of evil, ſtripp'd

of all his pride and pre-eminence of form, and perfection of parts; and laid proſtrate and groveling at his feet. Anticipating, in this ſhameful fall, and diſmal degradation, that dreadful defeat, and utter diminution of glory, which awaited the adverſary of mankind, (and perhaps under this very form) when the *ſeed of the woman* ſhould *bruiſe his head.*

BUT here it may be objected, that all this is only an account of vengeance upon the ſerpent; whereas the ſcriptures of the new teſtament explain all this of *Satan*, under the image of a ſerpent.

I ANSWER, that *Adam* and *Eve* could not but know, before this time, that the ſerpent was only an inſtrument of miſchief, made uſe of by ſome malignant ſpirit, in enmity to God and them. I ſay, *Adam* and *Eve* could not but know this. For they had learn'd, by their own ſad experience, that the forbidden fruit had not the vertue of ennobling nature, and inſpiring new abilities, but quite the contrary: and they knew the ſerpent had neither ſpeech nor reaſon from nature; and therefore the deluſion put upon them, muſt be the contrivance of ſome being, not only ſuperior to the ſerpent, but alſo far ſuperior to themſelves. The work of ſome ſpirit, which had taken poſſeſſion of the ſerpent's body, and wrought this deluſion, by his organs.

NOW a ſpirit aſſuming and actuating the body of a ſerpent, may, I think, with great propriety be called a *ſerpent*; as the Son of God, aſſuming a human body, is called a *man*; and therefore the ſtyle of the ſcriptures is ſufficiently juſtified, in the appellation of *ſatan*, by the name of the ſerpent. ---- Nor is there any more difficulty in conceiving how ſatan could actuate the organs of the ſerpent on this occaſion, than how a reaſonable ſoul can actuate the organs of this animal body we bear about us.

BUT

BUT ſome will ask, How *Adam* and *Eve* could have any idea of ſpirits? I anſwer, Many ways, conceivable even to us; and many ways utterly inconceivable at this diſtance, and in this ſtate of things. We are told, in the 28th chapter of *Job*, that when *the foundations of the earth were laid, the ſons of God ſhouted for joy*. And probably their jubilee was not leſs at the completion of that great work. And who can ſay that *Adam* and *Eve* might not have been witneſſes to the hallelujahs of that heavenly chorus on this occaſion? or, who will ſay, that, in the perfection and innocence of their nature, they were not ſubjects worthy the curioſity, and companions not unworthy the converſation of the higheſt order of heavenly beings? And what might they not learn from ſuch a communication?

BUT ſhould nothing of this kind inform them, can it be imagined that *Adam* had not knowledge to all the purpoſes that we have? Or, at leaſt, to all the purpoſes of his duty and well-being? *Adam* could not ſure be ignorant, that he had a thinking principle within himſelf, of a very ſuperior nature to the whole order of beings about him: and it was very eaſy for him to imagine, that other thinking beings might exceed him, as far as he exceeded the beſt, or even the meaneſt, of the brutes. Nay more, if we allow him as much capacity as any man of common contemplation among his ſons, (and one would imagine this were no mighty conceſſion,) 'tis evident, he muſt ſoon learn, that the bodies of the creatures, could, of themſelves, have neither ſenſe nor motion: he knew they were made of duſt; and ſurely it requir'd no great ſagacity to know, that neither duſt, nor any thing made of duſt, could think or move: And therefore, whatever thought or motion was obſervable in the creatures, muſt be owing to the action and perception of ſome ſpirit within them: And,

this point being gain'd, it was certainly eaſy for him to proceed one ſtep farther; and to reaſon thus with himſelf; that the ſentence of toil and bodily labour, which it pleaſed God to pronounce againſt him, on this occaſion, could never be intended to terminate only in his body; which was, in truth, no more than the poor, paſſive, unoffending inſtrument of the ſpirit that ruled it: And, 'tis evident, that when he once knew, that the ſerpent had not beguiled *Eve* by virtue of new faculties, deriv'd from eating the forbidden fruit, nor by the power of his own ſpirit, which diſcovered no ſuch ability either before or after: he was under a neceſſity of concluding, that this creature muſt have beguiled her, by the power of ſome other ſpirit, dwelling in him at that time: and when he once concluded this, he could not but conclude, that the ſentence paſs'd upon that animal, muſt of neceſſity be referr'd to that ſpirit which ruled his carcaſs on this occaſion; that carcaſs, which was no more than the paſſive inſtrument of a ſuperior intelligence. This, I ſay, muſt be as clearly intelligible to *Adam*, as that the ſentence of pain and puniſhment paſs'd upon himſelf, tho' literally decreed againſt his body, muſt of neceſſity refer, and be intended as a puniſhment, to the principle of perception in him, which ruled and ſwayed his body, to the committal of that crime, which deſerved ſuch vengeance from his Maker.

And, if *Adam* could have any doubt of the truth of this reaſoning, the ſentence of God, pronounced againſt the ſerpent, muſt clearly and fully confirm him in it. For that ſentence is plainly directed and denounced againſt an intelligent being, and a free agent; who had committed a crime, which a brute was not capable of committing; and deſerved a puniſhment, which a mere paſſive inſtrument could not deſerve. And this conſideration could not but aſcertain to *Adam*, the true object of the divine wrath and vengeance, on this occaſion; which could be no other,

other, than the evil ſpirit who had committed the offence.

And, when he was once fully poſſeſſed of this point, all the reſt was eaſy. His next enquiry naturally would be, what his Maker could mean, by bruiſing the head of that inſtrument of miſchief? That he could not underſtand this according to the letter, I have already ſhewn; and therefore, he was under a neceſſity of interpreting it in a figurative ſenſe. And certainly it was not hard for him to conceive, that the head was a natural and obvious emblem of power and pre-eminence. And ſo natural an emblem it is, that it hath been us'd as another name for power, in all ages, and in moſt languages of the world, and eſpecially the *Hebrew*. And ſurely it would be hard to ſuppoſe *Adam* ignorant of the idiom of his own tongue; as there is all the reaſon in the world to believe, that the *Hebrew* was his own.

Besides this, he could not but know, that his own head ruled the reſt of his body; and that it was the ſeat of that dominion, wherewith he preſided over the reſt of the creatures: and therefore he could not but quickly and clearly conclude, that the bruiſing the head of the ſerpent, muſt ſignify, the cruſhing and deſtroying the dominion and power of that ſpirit, which had now ſway'd the organs of this creature, to his deſtruction.

And probably it was in alluſion to this hiſtory, and this interpretation, that ſerpents have been conſider'd as emblems of power, from the earlieſt antiquity. And we know, that when *Epaminondas* * would teach his ſoldiers that they ſhould deſtroy the whole power of the enemy, if they could once break the *Spartans*, who were at their head; he did this by bruiſing the head of a great ſerpent before them,

* Vid. Polyæn. Stratag. l. 2.

and

and then ſhewing them, that the reſt of the body was of no force. And it were hard if *Adam* could not conceive the head of a ſerpent, to be a proper emblem of hoſtile power, as well as *Epaminondas*. And this once underſtood, his hopes muſt quickly riſe in conſequence of that light.

He found that *the ſeed of the woman* (which doubtleſs he underſtood to be her iſſue by him) was to be at enmity with this evil ſpirit; and ſhould, in the end, deſtroy his power. Enmity implies an oppoſition of inclination and intereſt; and therefore enmity to evil, muſt infer an inclination to good. And ſuch a diſpoſition in his ſeed, gave hopes of a recovery of that rectitude of will, which he himſelf had loſt by his diſobedience.

But whatever *Adam* might do, we plainly ſee that theſe conſequences are fairly deduceable from that ſentence. — Nor is it to be imagined, that *Adam* could not at leaſt conceive ſo much hope from it, as was ſufficient to keep up a ſenſe of religion in his mind; which was all that was abſolutely neceſſary.— It was alſo obvious for him to conclude, that the deſtroying the power of his adverſary, muſt imply conqueſt; that the conqueſt of a ſpirit ſo ſuperior to himſelf, muſt neceſſarily imply abilities very much ſuperior to his own; and if his ſeed were once poſſeſſed of rectitude of will, added to better abilities, they muſt, at leaſt, be reſtored to the primitive perfection of human nature; and ſeemingly to more. And in that perfection, they muſt certainly be acceptable to their Maker.

'Tis true, he and *Eve* muſt *return to* their *duſt*; and poſſibly might not live to ſee this triumph and reſtitution of their ſpecies, in their ſeed; the humility, to which the ſenſe of their guilt had reduced them, would eaſily ſuggeſt, that probably they, who were ſuch criminals, were unworthy the honour and

and happineſs of being admitted to ſee that bleſſed ſtate of things; but, however, it could not fail to be matter of infinite ſatisfaction to them, to think, that their poſterity ſhould attain it.

AND thus, having inconteſtably proved the neceſſity of ſome revelation of mercy to be given to *Adam*, at the time of that unſpeakable calamity with which he was overwhelm'd, upon the denunciation of God's wrath againſt him; and having, by a natural, and obvious train of thinking, ſhewn you, that *Adam*, with a common degree of reaſon and reflection, muſt, after mature reflection and deliberation, of neceſſity conclude that *Eve*'s deception was wrought by a malignant ſpirit, acting by the organs of the ſerpent; and conſequently, that the ſentence, denounced againſt that creature, muſt of neceſſity be referred to that evil ſpirit, who was the author of the guilt; having alſo ſhewn you, how *Adam*, by a very natural and obvious interpretation of one figurative expreſſion, agreeable to the idiom of his own language, might derive clear and rational hopes of the deſtruction of his real enemy, from the ſentence pronounced againſt the ſerpent; as alſo of the reſtitution of his poſterity to their original purity and perfection, by that deſtruction: I ſhould next proceed, to clear ſome other difficulties in relation to this ſentence.

A digreſſion in anſwer to one part of the letter to Dr. *Waterland*.

But before I enter upon this ſubject, I muſt beg leave to obviate a common objection which lies againſt this way of interpretation, which I have now taken; *viz.* that it is not fair to interpret one ſentence of the ſame diſcourſe literally, and another figuratively: and a late ingenious writer * inſults the weakneſs and ignorance of

* Letter to Dr. *Waterland*. p. 14.

be-

believers upon this head, with ſuch a vivacity and fulneſs of ſpirits, as is not always decent, even in the triumphs of truth. Speaking of the *Moſaic* hiſtory of the creation, fall, *&c.*—he has theſe words:

"MUST we believe it all an *allegory*? No. Muſt "we believe it to be all *literal*? No. What then are "we to do? Why we are to conſider it neither as *fact* "nor *fable*; neither *literal* nor *allegorical*; but *both* "together: to interpret one ſentence *literally*; the "next *allegorically*, *&c.*—

FOR inſtance; *God made man*, we accept *literally*; but *after his own image*, in a *figurative* or *metaphorical* ſenſe, *&c.*

NOW 'tis evident from this inſtance, that this ingenious writer makes no diſtinction between metaphor and allegory; if he had, he could not but ſee, that he is the allegorical interpreter, who takes the whole account of the fall, as related by *Moſes*, to be a kind of *Egyptian*, or eaſtern fable; under which ſome hidden truth is intended to be convey'd; and that Dr. *Waterland*, and ſuch as think with him, underſtand the *Moſaic* account of this matter, as no way fabulous or hieroglyphical; but an hiſtorical relation of fact; (a real ſerpent, a real apple, *&c.*) tho' with ſome obſcurity, and ſome metaphorical expreſſions.

I CAN'T explain my ſelf on this head better, than by the inſtance objected by this gentleman, (the author of the letter.)

GOD *made man*, we accept *literally*; but *after his own image*, in a *figurative* or *metaphorical* ſenſe: And with great ſubmiſſion to this ingenious writer; What is there, unfair, or irrational in this conduct? Is not this the proper, and the rational way of interpreting

ing every writing under heaven, as well as the ſcriptures? Is there one good writing in the world, which muſt not thus be interpreted in every page? and would not otherwiſe be abſurd and unintelligible?

IT were eaſy to illuſtrate this in infinite inſtances; but I ſhall beg leave only to mention one; and from an author, whom, I am ſure, this gentleman will not deny to be a good writer.

IN the letter to Dr. *Waterland*, p. 15. are theſe words, ---- "Now is it not more rational to follow "one uniform conſiſtent way of interpretation, than "to jump at every ſtep, ſo arbitrarily from *letter* to "*allegory?* And if the *letter* be found in fact contra-"dictory to reaſon, and the notions we have of God, "What is there left, but to recur to *allegory?*"

NOW taking the words *allegory* and *metaphor* to ſignify the ſame thing, (as this gentleman has thought fit to do on this occaſion) I would gladly know how the reader is to underſtand this period. Muſt he believe it all an *allegory*? No. Muſt he believe it ſhould all be interpreted according to the letter? No. What then are we to do? Why, we are to conſider it as neither *literal* nor *allegorical*, but both together.

FOR inſtance, ---- the firſt part of the period, [*now is it not more rational to follow one uniform conſiſtent way of interpretation*] is neither *literal* nor *allegorical*, but both together: the words, *more rational* I underſtand *literally*: *to follow one uniform conſiſtent way*, I take to be *metaphorical*: the words, *of interpretation*, I underſtand *literally*: the ſubſequent words, *to jump at every ſtep*, I take to be *metaphorical*: and for this plain reaſon;

I CANNOT believe that a writer of ſuch excellent underſtanding, can mean *literal*, *real* jumps and ſteps

ſteps in this place; becauſe ſuch an interpretation would be found in fact contradictory to reaſon, and the notions we have of good writing: What then *is there left* (to uſe his own words) *but to recur to allegory*?

NOW what I cannot believe of this author, I cannot believe of *Moſes*: and therefore, when *Moſes* ſays, that man was made in the *image* of God; I can no more underſtand the word *image* here, of a *real, literal, ſenſible* image, than I can this author's *jumps* and *ſteps* in this place, to ſignify *real, literal, jumps* and *ſteps*; becauſe I think one interpretation would be as contradictory to reaſon, and as unworthy of *Moſes*, and of God, as the other would be unworthy of this ingenious author.

I APPEAL to every reader of candor and common ſenſe; Would it not be exceſſively abſurd, or exceſſively diſingenuous in me, not to interpret this ingenious author's writings in a fair, rational way; as partly *literal*, and partly *figurative*? And can I eſcape the juſteſt imputations of abſurdity and diſingenuity, if I fail to treat the writings of *Moſes* with the ſame candor, and to judge of them by the ſame rules of rational interpretation? And muſt it follow from hence, that we muſt conſider this hiſtory as neither *fact* nor *fable*? No, ſurely,---- ſince figurative interpretations, of particular ſentences, in hiſtorical relations, are perfectly conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt truth of fact. All then that can be required of us, is, to ſhew that this hiſtory, conſidered as ſtrictly true in fact, (tho', in ſome reſpects, obſcure) has nothing in it that we can find, any way unworthy either of the wiſdom or goodneſs of God.---- How far the precedent diſſertations have effected this; as alſo, how far the ſubſequent, may be of any uſe to the ſame purpoſe, the reader will beſt judge.

DIS-

DISSERTATION VI.

Concerning ſome difficulties and objections that lie againſt the Moſaic *account of the fall.*

I COME now to conſider ſome difficulties which yet lie againſt my explication of this ſentence, as pronounced upon ſatan under the image of the ſerpent.

AND the firſt difficulty is this;

WHY *God puniſhed the evil ſpirit, under the figure of the ſerpent?*

THAT it was neceſſary, in the wiſdom of God, to puniſh the author of evil at this time, and in the preſence of *Adam* and *Eve*, is evident; Otherwiſe they might have been led into a moſt dangerous and deſtructive error: they might imagine, that there was ſome principle of evil in the world, ſome powerful malignant ſpirit independent of God, and capable of controlling his will: * and therefore there was a neceſſity that God ſhould exert ſuch a power over this evil ſpirit, in the preſence of *Adam* and *Eve*, as might convince them, that he was ſubject to the almighty power of their Maker; and ſeverely accountable to him, for all the miſchief he wrought in the world; as might convince them, in the ſtyle

* See Dr. *Sherlock*'s diſcourſes of propheſy.

of

of the prophet, that *he was God, and that there was none elſe*; ---- *that he was God, and there was none like him*, ---- *ſaying, My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.* ---- And what could be a clearer proof of this, than ſubduing that evil ſpirit, in that very brutal diſguiſe, which he had put on, the better to accompliſh his malice againſt God, and his creatures; than to let them ſee, that he was not ſo much as able to defend the poor creature, whoſe carcaſs he had uſurp'd, from immediate infamy; nor dared ſo much as to open his mouth, either in vindication of his own conduct, or mitigation of his ſentence?

Now (to ſay nothing of the ſentence paſs'd upon the principal himſelf on this occaſion) 'tis evident, that an uncontrolled puniſhment of the accomplices in guilt, in the preſence of the principal, plainly proves a power over the principal; and the nature of the proceeding, muſt ſuppoſe the chief criminal preſent, when ſentence was paſs'd.

The ſame thing is alſo evident, from the tenor of the ſentence, expreſsly directed to him, *i. e.* directed againſt the ſerpent, as an intelligent criminal. Nor will the malignity of his nature ſuffer us ſo much as to ſuſpect that he would attempt to retire, before he was ſurpriz'd in his guilt by God: for that would infallibly ſuggeſt to him, to ſtay, and enjoy the fruits of his triumph, to the full. Or, if we ſuſpect that his malignity would not detain him, his curioſity certainly would. Nay, there was a neceſſity, in point of real information, that he ſhould ſtay: for, in truth, it was impoſſible otherwiſe for him to know, what evil effects the forbidden fruit would have upon that unhappy pair: for this, nothing but God, who made that and them, could know, without experiment and obſervation. Nay, there is reaſon to believe that he expected they would die that very day; from thoſe words of God to them, *In the day ye eat thereof ye ſhall ſurely*

surely die: and this seems to have been his chief aim, in deluding them to eat that fruit: the utter destruction of that species, for whom God had created a world, was a scheme of evil worthy his highest malignity; and therefore there is not the least doubt of his waiting there, with the utmost impatience to see the success of his device. Or, if we could suppose him fled, how easy was it for an all-powerful, omnipresent Being, to bring him back to the place of his punishment? And when he was there, the wisdom of God would naturally engage him to arrest him there, in such a manner, as to leave *Adam* and *Eve* fully satisfied, that he heard and felt the vengeance denounc'd against him; which it was easy for God to do, and which doubtless he did.

And as to his being punish'd, under the figure of the serpent, we know, that a spirit cannot be punish'd, to human eyes, otherwise than under some sensible appearance; and what other sensible appearance could have any relation to him, or his crime? and besides, what could be a more proper humiliation of his pride, than to punish him under that (now debased) brutal form, in which he perpetrated the guilt? Suppose a prince surpriz'd a malignant subject, of the first quality, plotting rebellion against him, in some obscure and infamous disguise; may we not imagine, that it would greatly add to his mortification, to be executed, in all the infamy of that character he had taken upon him? and yet the mortification must be infinitely stronger in the present case. To have the proudest spirit of heaven degraded down to the infamy of a brute! Nay, to have that very brute, degraded far below his own natural character, sunk into the very lowest and vilest condition of brutality, in order to sink his inmate yet lower! To have the proudest spirit of heaven, known by no other name among men and angels, to all eternity, than that of a vile serpent; nor distinguish'd for any other talents,

than ſuch as characterize that baſeſt of brutes, to the whole world; deceit, treachery, malignity, and enmity to every thing good and excellent! *O Lucifer, ſon of the morning, how art thou fallen from heaven! How art thou cut down to the ground! Thou that ſaidſt in thy heart, I will aſcend unto heaven, I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God, ---- I will aſcend above the heights of the clouds, ---- I will be like to the Moſt High, ---- yet art thou brought down to hell!*

THE next queſtion that comes to be examin'd is this:

WHY *the ſerpent was puniſh'd, being incapable of guilt.*

IN anſwer to this; I muſt own 'tis to me a moſt ſhocking and preſumptuous enquiry, to ask why God diſpoſes or determines of his creatures, in this or that manner! Is it not enough for us to know, that the purity and perfection of his nature, will not ſuffer him to act, otherwiſe, than by the direction of infinite wiſdom, under the influence of infinite goodneſs? Cannot he, who gave being, and beauty, and excellence to his creatures, reſume them all, when, and as often as he thinks fit? and ſhall we ſay unto God, *What doſt thou?* But foraſmuch as queſtions of this kind, are often ask'd from a ſeeming concern for the honour of God, and therefore have ſome claim to our regard on that ſcore; let it be ſufficient to tell all ſuch enquirers, that God created the brute world, for his own glory, and the good of man; *i. e.* for the manifeſtation of his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, in providing ſo amply, and ſo admirably, for the human happineſs; and that his wiſdom, as well as goodneſs, to the brute world, is yet farther manifeſted, in ſubmitting them to the dominion of man; as might eaſily be made appear; and as for their outward ſplendor,

dor, inaſmuch as it appears to be of no conſequence to themſelves, 'tis not eaſy to conceive, why Infinite Wiſdom poured it upon them, in ſuch variety and profuſion, unleſs, to entertain the curioſity and the wonder of that active and inquiſitive ſpirit, wherewith he hath endowed this lord of the nether world. That his curioſity, ſhould even in its weakneſs, lead him in every reſearch, to adore his Almighty Maker, with higher degrees of admiration and reverence. And therefore, ſhould theſe outward perfections, by any unhappy accident, become ſo far liable to be abus'd, as to defeat the very ends for which they were beſtowed: muſt not the ſame goodneſs take them away, for the very ſame reaſons for which he beſtowed them? And this, according to the tenor of *Moſes*'s account, is the very caſe of the ſerpent in the point before us. When Satan had ſeduc'd man to ſin againſt his Maker, by the abuſe of thoſe very perfections, in one of his creatures, which ſhould naturally have inflam'd his adoration, into higher acts of praiſe and thankſgiving: the power and wiſdom of God were many ways concerned to impair that excellence, which was ſo abus'd.

1. THE power and majeſty of God were concern'd (as I before ſhew'd you) in letting *Adam* and *Eve* ſee, that the wicked ſpirit, who had employed the ſerpent's organs to their hurt, was not able to defend his own inſtrument, from immediate diſgrace: His wiſdom alſo demanded ſome ſignal mark of vengeance againſt the inſtrument of evil; in manifeſtation of his invincible abhorrence of guilt. (So the beaſt that had been abus'd to uncleanneſs, under the law, was to periſh; and the very gold which compos'd that calf that ſeduc'd *Iſrael* to ſin, was to be diſpers'd and mix'd with common duſt.) And who will ſay, that the vindication of God's authority, and the ſteady, unalterable manifeſtation of his irreconcileable enmity to evil, are not of infinitely more

value, than the beauty, or even the being, of the higheſt and nobleſt of his creatures? Nor can it be pretended, that there is the leaſt ſhadow of injuſtice in the caſe; it being a known maxim, that there can be no injury, where there is no right: And what other right has any creature to being or excellence of any kind, but the will of his Maker? Beſides, it can't be ſuppos'd there was any hardſhip to the creature, in the curſe now denounced; for what we call a worſe condition in the creatures, muſt ariſe, from a contraction of life, a diminution of happineſs, a diminution of outward ſplendor and perfection, or ſome acceſſion of real miſery. As to the two firſt, 'tis evident, that if brutes are ſuppos'd to be created in that ſtate, and with that degree of happineſs, in which we now ſee them, we can make no reaſonable objection to the divine goodneſs on that account; and certainly 'tis no more an imputation upon the Divine Goodneſs, to reduce them to this ſtate, than it would have been to have created them in it: For as brutes have no anticipation of death, nor a capacity of reflecting and comparing, 'tis evident that a diminution of happineſs, which implies no degree of miſery, can be no evil. A leſs good, is indeed comparatively evil; but then this idea of evil ariſes entirely from compariſon: And therefore where there is no compariſon, there certainly can be no *ratio* of evil; and where there is no evil, there can be no injury.

As to the 3d point, 'tis evident, that all outward perfections of the creatures, with all ſuch qualities as may make them more amiable and uſeful to man, were beſtow'd ſolely for the ſake of man: Nor can brutes be reaſonably ſuppos'd to have an idea of them; nor would the ends of their being (with regard to themſelves) be any way defeated by a diminution of them. God made this earth and all the creatures amiable and excellent, to make the world a ſcene of greater happineſs to a creature that was to continue in it: but

but when ſin introduc'd death, he curs'd the earth and the creatures by a diminution of excellence; to make the world leſs deſirable to a creature who was ſo ſoon to leave it. Now a diminution of outward excellence, or other qualities that might make the creatures more uſeful and amiable to man, by no means infers a diminution of real happineſs; and much leſs an acceſſion of real miſery; which the goodneſs of God will not ſuffer us to ſuſpect him capable of inflicting upon an innocent creature. The ſentence denounced againſt him (the ſerpent) does indeed affect his form and food; but not his ſubtilty, nor perhaps his ſtrength: or, ſay it affected his ſtrength as well as form, 'tis evident, that the wiſdom of God is in this caſe beyond all compariſon better manifeſted, in the ample ſupport of apparent incapacity and imperfection. For example, if God hath deprived the ſerpent of feet to carry him to a due ſearch of the neceſſities of life, ſurely he hath abundantly compenſated that defect, by feeding him to the full at his eaſe; as it is notorious, that even the birds of the air fly into his very mouth to feed him. And 'tis perhaps for no other reaſon, that God Almighty hath permitted many of theſe creatures to grow to an enormous bulk, thro' the courſe of many ſucceeding centuries, but that men might bear witneſs to the extraordinary, and, to us, miraculous ſupport of this ſeemingly imperfect animal, from generation to generation. As we are told, there was a ſerpent in *Africa*, in the time of the firſt *Carthaginian* war, of ſuch an enormous ſtrength and ſize, as gave *Regulus* and his army work enough to ſubdue him, with their engines of war; (as we are alſo told of many others) and if after this, you ſuppoſe the ſerpent's ſtrength diminiſhed, at leaſt it muſt be allowed, that this diminution was not more than was abſolutely neceſſary.

MOSES tells us in the 3d chapter of *Geneſis*, That *the ſerpent was more ſubtile than any beaſt*

of the field which the Lord God had made. And naturaliſts aſſure us, that his ſubtilty enables him to contend with the ſtrength of the elephant, and to conquer it: others tell us, that the ſerpent has a faſcination in his eyes; and bewitches the creatures to their deſtruction. And what does all this mean, but that he has a ſubtilty in tempting and ſeducing, which exceeds not only the capacity, but the comprehenſion of the moſt accurate obſervers of mankind.

If God then hath impaired the ſerpent to all appearance, and yet left him wherewithal to ſupply all the demands of nature, in a moſt extraordinary and moſt amazing manner, is it poſſible to imagine a greater demonſtration either of the wiſdom of God, or the truth of the *Moſaic* hiſtory, than this? The ſerpent is impair'd, and yet he is a match for armies; he is reduc'd to all the imperfection of a worm, and yet is he able to ſupport himſelf in a ſtate of enmity with the whole world.

But farther yet; another reaſon why the ſerpent was impair'd in his outward perfections, was, that this inſtrument of ſatan might carry leſs temptation; when God, in his infinite wiſdom, foreſaw, that ſatan, would, more than once, abuſe this very creature, to the ſame wicked purpoſes. As it is notorious, that there is ſcarce a nation under heaven, which he hath not ſeduc'd, at ſundry times, to the groſſeſt and vileſt idolatry (even the idolatry of his own helliſh worſhip) in the figure, and under the ſemblance of ſerpents of all kinds.

Cou'd any thing then be more wiſe, or more beneficent in Almighty God, than to deface that excellence in the ſerpent's form, which he knew would be a temptation to idolatrous worſhip; and at the ſame time to inſpire mankind with a ſtrong enmity to him,

not

not only to with-hold, but to deter them from deluſion: when he yet knew, that in ſpight of all theſe diſadvantages, and this antipathy, they would be ſeduc'd by their adverſary, to pay him divine adoration, under that very appearance? Now this fact being admitted, what conduct could better become the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, than curſing this creature in ſo eminent a manner, above all other beaſts of the field, as *Moſes* aſſures us he did?

AND here I cannot help putting this plain queſtion to our adverſaries; Do they know, that mankind have been ſo often deluded, in ſo many ages and regions of the world, to pay divine adoration to ſerpents? If they do not know this, they are ſo far from being in a condition to inſult the ignorance of believers, that their own ignorance is indeed lamentable: and if they do know it, will they yet dare to deride us, for believing that *Eve* miſtook one of that ſpecies for a reaſonable creature, when ſo many millions of her ſons and daughters have, not only miſtaken, but ador'd an infinity of them as divine? In a word, if they do not know this, they are the moſt pitiable, in point of ignorance, of any ſect that ever pretended to a ſuperiority of light and learning; and if they do know it, they are at once the moſt ſhameleſs and moſt abandon'd of the ſons of *Adam*. Let infidels chooſe which ſide of this dilemma they like beſt.

BUT here it may be objected, *That other creatures were worſhipped as well as the ſerpent.*

I ANSWER, That other creatures were alſo curſed as well as the ſerpent; but as God, in his infinite wiſdom, foreſaw, that men would be more deluded to the worſhip of the ſerpent, than to that of any other creature, as in fact they were; therefore did he curſe the ſerpent above any other creature.

AGAIN; if it be asked, *Why the tempter choſe the body of the ſerpent preferably to that of any other creature?*

I ANSWER, Becauſe he was more ſubtle, and probably more excellent in his make; and his aſpect more reſembling the human; as ſome of that ſpecies are ſaid to have at this day. Now theſe advantages, ſeem'd to imply ſuperior perfection; and ſuperior perfection made the gradation from brute to rational more credible; and conſequently, the true tempter was better hid; whereas, had he aſſumed the diſguiſe of an aſs or a dove, (which a late very ingenious writer thinks had been fitter engines for ſatan) the gradation had been much more prodigious; and, of conſequence, much more liable to ſuſpicion and diſtruſt.

ADD to this, That no finite being can actuate any creature beyond what the fitneſs and capacity of his organs will admit: and therefore the natural ſubtilty of the ſerpent, and perhaps, the pliableneſs and forkineſs of his tongue (which we know enables other creatures to pronounce articulate ſounds) added to the advantages of his form, made him the fitteſt inſtrument of deluſion that can be imagin'd.

BUT here it may be objected, *If the tempter had ſo many advantages to ſtrengthen his deluſion, why were our firſt parents puniſhed for yielding to it?*

I ANSWER, That this temptation, all things conſider'd, was not ſtronger to them, than ordinary temptations are, at this day, to their poſterity.

WE know that temptations are now prevalent with mankind, from ignorance, from evil example, from natural depravity, or from preſſing neceſſity.

Iſt,

1*ſt*, I SAY, men are now tempted to tranſgreſs in a thouſand inſtances, from downright ignorance. Nay, they are often tempted to tranſgreſs the law of God, from the ſecret ſuggeſtions of their own corrupt hearts, or the open ſuggeſtions of their ſeducers, that it is not the law of God, but the contrivance of prieſts and princes, to keep the world in awe. But *Adam* and *Eve* had no pretence of ignorance of any kind. They knew the law, the legiſlator, and the danger of tranſgreſſing. God himſelf forbad them to touch the fruit; and told them the evil which would inevitably attend their diſobedience: therefore they are utterly inexcuſable upon the head of ignorance.

EVIL example they had none, but that of the ſerpent: And how could the example of a brute be any rule of action to them? The example of men, is, in many inſtances, in the place of precept to men: their wiſdom, and their ſucceſs, are often eſteem'd ſufficient ſecurities for a ſafe imitation; but the example of a brute, could be neither ſecurity, nor precept. What was advantageous to a ſerpent, might be pernicious to a man: what was permitted to a brute, who was neither capable of law nor ſin, might, for the higheſt reaſons, be prohibited to man, who is capable of both.

NATURAL depravity they had none, being made good, and perfect in their kind. And neceſſity they had none, having an infinite variety of other fruits, every way as good, and as deſirable, for ſupply of their natural wants, as that which was withheld from them; --- for we are aſſured, that God gave them every tree upon the face of the earth, that was good for food, and pleaſant to the ſight, except that ſingle tree; and there is not the leaſt reaſon to believe, that

that this had any advantage, in theſe reſpects, over any one of all the reſt.

AND here I cannot but obſerve, how faithfully *the ſons of perdition* retain, to this day, the ſame ſpirit of calumny, which reign'd in the old ſerpent from the beginning: hardily imputing all the reſtraints of religion, to the craft of God's prieſts, to keep men in ſubjection to themſelves; as *ſatan* imputed the firſt reſtraint, to the craft of God, to keep man in interiority and awe.

BUT ſtill it may be ask'd, *Why this inſtance of obedience was exacted of Adam and Eve? and why this temptation was thrown in their way, when God knew they would tranſgreſs?*

SHOULD * a father diſcard and diſinherit his child for having deſerted ſome poſt aſſign'd him, ſeduced either by the craft of ſome old ſophiſter, or driven off by ſuperior ſtrength? *&c.*

CICERO tells us, that the very gods of the poets, had they known how pernicious their gifts would prove to their children, muſt be thought to have been wanting in kindneſs towards them, *&c.*

I ANSWER, That theſe are indeed plauſible enquiries and objections: but if they are thoroughly conſidered, nothing in nature can be more preſumptuous, or unjuſtifiable. For to ask, why God did not make man independent of his own authority, or ſuperior to temptation in any particular inſtance, is in reality to ask, why he made him a creature? and if a creature, why a reaſonable creature, and a free agent? or, having made him ſuch, why

* Vide letter to Dr. *Waterland*, p. 17, *&c.*

he

he did not make him an abſolutely perfect being, --- *i.e.* God? For if we have a right to know why God did not make him more perfect in this point of the forbidden fruit, we have the ſame right to know why he did not make him more perfect in another, and in a third, and ſo on endleſsly; till we know why he did not make him as perfect as himſelf. And if God had a right to make his creatures ameneable to his authority in all inſtances, why not in any particular inſtance? Who is beſt judge in this caſe, God, or you?

BUT this will be better cleared, by diſcuſſing this point in a more particular manner.

IN the firſt place then, it is evident, that no being, is, or can be, independent, but God. Dependence is included in the very idea of a creature. If God had plac'd *Adam* in a ſtate of dependence upon any of the higheſt orders of heavenly beings, 'tis evident, he had been, ſo far, placed in a ſtate of infelicity; becauſe the higheſt imaginable degree of created excellence, muſt of neceſſity imply ſome degree of ignorance and imperfection: And man had then been to archangels, for example, what brutes are now to men; who are, in a thouſand inſtances, incapable of ſupplying their wants, or preventing their miſery. And therefore when God created man with a dependence only upon himſelf, 'tis evident, he, ſo far, conſulted his higheſt intereſts and happineſs. Since then, man, as a creature, muſt of neceſſity be dependent: and, being dependent, it was his intereſt to be immediately dependent of God: it was certainly his intereſt alſo, to have a ſure and conſtant ſenſe of that dependence kept up in his mind: for otherwiſe, he might loſe the advantage of it, upon any exigency. And no created being can be imagin'd ſo perfect, as never to need the guidance, or influence, or aſſiſtance of infinite

infinite power, and infinite wiſdom. And if it was *Adam*'s advantage to have a conſtant ſenſe of that dependency kept up in his mind, it was certainly his advantage to have ſome ſure and permanent memorial of it, placed before his eyes, in ſuch a manner, as ſhould make it impoſſible for him to forget it.

BESIDES this, as *Adam*'s intereſt required ſuch a dependency, the honour of God exacted ſome manifeſtation of it: for dependency in a creature, without ſome mark or manifeſtation of ſuch a ſtate, is utterly unintelligible; or, to ſpeak more properly, is a contradiction: becauſe 'tis, with regard to that creature, to all intents and purpoſes, a ſtate of independency. And therefore, if the honour of God, and the character of a Creator, neceſſarily require ſome manifeſtation of dependency in his creatures, 'tis evident, that in a reaſonable creature, they require ſuch manifeſtation of it, as is moſt agreeable to the nature of a reaſonable creature, and a free agent; a creature ſenſible of dependency, and capable of acknowledging it. And how can this acknowledgement be made, but by homage and obedience of ſome kind? and all homage and obedience, of neceſſity imply ſome reſtraint of natural liberty. And, ſince ſome reſtraint of natural liberty was neceſſary, in *Adam*'s caſe; what reſtraint could be more eaſy, than a reſtraint of his appetite from one fruit, amidſt an infinite variety of others no leſs delicious, and poſſibly many, perhaps all of them, more ſo? And, at the ſame time, what reſtraint could be more worthy the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God, than the prohibition of a fruit, which he knew would be pernicious to his creature?

AND probably it was for this very reaſon, that the tree of knowledge was placed in a diſtinguiſh'd ſituation, in the midſt of the garden. For I have already

already ſhewn, that if a dependence upon God was for *Adam*'s intereſt, a conſtant ſenſe of that dependency muſt be ſo too; and how ſhould that be better kept up, than by ſome remarkable memorial before his eyes? And what could more naturally contribute to make ſuch a memorial remarkable, than a very ſingular and diſtinguiſhed ſituation? And if ſome reſtraint of *Adam*'s liberty was neceſſary, in manifeſtation and acknowledgement of dependency; and God in his wiſdom thought fit to place that reſtraint upon ſome indulgence of appetite, which would be pernicious to him; (for that there was no neceſſity of ſuch moral reſtraints, in that ſtate of things, as are now found expedient, is ſufficiently evident) could any thing better become his wiſdom and goodneſs, than to place the object of that appetite in ſome place ſo diſtinguiſh'd, as to prevent all poſſibility of miſtaking that fruit for any other?

And as to its being a perpetual object of temptation; for my part, I have no idea of any Being placed out of the reach of temptation, but God alone. All created beings have of neceſſity limited powers; and are of neceſſity, limited in the uſe of theſe powers; and, if every thing not granted, be a reſtraint, every creature in the univerſe is reſtrain'd; and, as ſuch, every angel, of every order, muſt be in the midſt of temptations, even in the midſt of heaven. But at the ſame time, ſurely all thoſe creatures muſt be inexcuſable who, when God hath given them every thing neceſſary for their happineſs, will yet repine if they have not more; and diſobey where they are not indulg'd. And therefore the conduct of Almighty God, with relation to the reſtraint laid upon *Adam*, however liable to exception at firſt ſight, yet will, upon a thorough enquiry, be found to flow from the inexhauſtible fountain of his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs.

As

As to the particular objections urged in the letter to Dr. *Waterland*, the learned and ingenious author could, I am ſure, had he thought fit to take the other ſide of the queſtion, have given them clear and ſolid ſolutions; he knows very well, that God neither diſcarded nor diſinherited his ſon, tho' he chaſtiſed his diſobedience; and that ſuch chaſtiſement may be (and, upon the Chriſtian ſcheme, was) the effect of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs in the author; that the curſe upon *Adam*, and the earth, was the effect of mercy, not *fury*; to make a temporary life, and a vexatious world, leſs deſirable to him; that tho' his happineſs was impair'd, yet neither his hope nor his inheritance were cut off; and that obedience left him ſtill in a capacity of recovering more, than all that diſobedience had forfeited.

But yet if, notwithſtanding the manifeſt equity and benignity of the divine conduct on this occaſion, this acute author cannot ſee how it can be acquitted of *ſeeming injuſtice, and unreaſonable ſeverity*, I judge him not: *to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth*; —— but I earneſtly wiſh him to remember, that the wiſeſt of mortal beings may too eaſily be blinded by vanity: and drawn into the greateſt abſurdities, in defence of a favourite hypotheſis.

But 'tis objected, (by the ſame writer, *p.* 18, 19.) that God can make nothing in vain, ---- yet paradiſe was ſo; ſince it was no ſooner made than forfeited, and, like a theatrical ſcene, changed in an inſtant to a proſpect of miſery and barrenneſs.

Is then every thing made in vain that is tranſitory? and did paradiſe vaniſh in an inſtant? and do the ſcriptures warrant us to believe ſo? quite the contrary. —— But ſuppoſe it to have laſted but one day; the *Ephemeris*'s whole life, and end of exiſtence,

iſtence, is fully compaſſed in a leſs ſpace; and yet the infinite wiſdom and almighty power of God, are as amply manifeſted in the formation of that inſect, as in the whole apparatus of paradiſe!

SUPPOSE it laſted but a day, —— 'tis evident, that the whole ſcheme of our redemption is built upon the tranſactions of that day: and is that vain and unworthy of God? and are you ſure it is? and can you prove it to be ſo? O arrogance of vanity! are the *times* and *ſeaſons* in our hands! and is it ours to ſay when — and how long! Muſt our ideas of duration and eſtimates of fitneſs determine Him, *with whom a thouſand years are but as one day*, ---- and one day as a thouſand years! Wiſe ſon of *Sirach*, how juſt is thy reflection! *wiſdom is far from* * *pride*.

BUT *Cicero* tells us, "that the *common opinion of* "*all philoſophers is, that the deity can neither be an-* "*gry nor hurt any body*; — how would he have been "ſurprized then, to find God repreſented here, as "*fierce* and *enraged*, driving out his own creatures "*in anger*, ----- and, in a *kind of fury, curſing the* "*very earth* for their ſakes!"

NOW would not any man that reads this paragraph, and ſaw the words *fierce, enraged, anger, fury*, in *Italick* characters, imagine at firſt ſight that *Moſes* made uſe of all theſe expreſſions, to ſet forth the vehemence and exceſs of the divine wrath on this occaſion? and that the Divine Being was repreſented as a fury, with a ſcourge of ſcorpions, driveing out his wretched creatures from bliſs? And yet how muſt he be aſtoniſhed to find no other foundation for all this calumny, than the deluſion

* Eccluſ. xv. 8.

of

of a vain, unruly, and blaſphemous imagination; except in the ſingle expreſſion of *curſing the earth*; which I have already ſhewn, and ſhall yet farther ſhew, to be the effect of mercy, not fury, to a creature whoſe guilt had entailed death and miſery upon himſelf, and his poſterity; —— not one ſyllable or leaſt hint of *anger*, *rage*, *fury*, or driving out, — throughout the whole relation; but quite the contrary.

WHOEVER conſiders *Moſes*'s account of this matter, will be more inclined to think, that they continued in paradiſe for ſome time after their ſentence; —— at leaſt, 'tis evident, that God was mindful of their well-being, and provided them proper protection from the weather, before their exile. —— Was this the dictate of fury? Nay more, God is repreſented by *Moſes*, as deliberating and aſſigning the moſt gracious reaſon imaginable for his removal of them; — even leſt they ſhould eat of the *tree of life*, *and live for ever*; which was doubtleſs, in that condition, the greateſt curſe of which they were capable: *therefore the Lord ſent* (not *drove*) *him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the earth from whence he was taken.*

'TIS true, when he hath related the fact in all the ſimplicity of truth, he afterwards, in reflecting upon it, does it in the ſtyle uſual on all occaſions of expreſſing all exiles or involuntary dimiſſions, by the terms of *driving* or *caſting* out, tho' ſuch actions were the known effects of the mildeſt juſtice, and conducted under all the circumſtances of tenderneſs and mercy; —— and the moſt equitable deciſions of law are, at this day, uſually expreſs'd in that ſtyle.

BUT ſtill this was hurting; — and *Cicero* and all the philoſophers hold, that the deity *can hurt nobody*.

I ANSWER, That a governor of the world, that *can hurt nobody*, (tho' ſuch a being cannot ſtrictly be ſaid to *be angry*) that is, that cannot, and will not puniſh vice and diſobedience, is a ſenſeleſs ſuppoſition; tho' all the free-thinkers in the world join'd all the heathen philoſophers that ever lived, in ſuggeſting and defending it.

I HAVE as high a veneration for *Cicero* and his talents, in their proper ſphere, as this objector, or any of his adherents: but I have an infinitely higher for Him *who brought life and immortality to light by the goſpel*: and I am confirmed in the juſtice of this way of thinking, when I find that every Chriſtian of common ſenſe, who hath read his bible with care, hath juſter, more adequate, and more honourable notions of God, than the wiſeſt heathen that ever lived.

BUT ſtill we are told, that "*Cicero* exclaims on "another occaſion, *Oh the wonderful equity of the* "*gods! would any people endure the maker of ſuch a* "*law, that the ſon or grandſon ſhould be puniſhed, be-* "*cauſe the father or grandfather had offended?* — how "would he have exclaimed then at *God*'s puniſh- "ing ſo ſeverely, not only the *firſt pair*, but *their* "*whole poſterity*, the whole race of mankind for "their ſin; and even the ſerpent too, for the fraud "of the devil?

THAT the ſerpent could be puniſhed, as he was, conſiſtently with divine juſtice, I have already ſhewn: that children may be puniſhed to the lateſt poſterity, or till the whole race is extinguiſhed, for the ſins of their parents, is a neceſſary conſequence from the nature and conſtitution of things; and therefore can be no imputation upon infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; ſince 'tis evidently the effect of both. - - - - And in

one word, to ſuppoſe it utterly inconſiſtent with equity, to puniſh the ſon for the offences of the father and grandfather, implies a moſt pitiable ignorance of all the laws of God, of nature, and of ſociety; how great ſoever the name may be, under which ſuch *ſillineſſes* are vended and protected.

LASTLY, this gentleman tells us, that *Cicero* laugh'd at the ſtory of *Alexander*'s dreaming that a ſerpent ſpoke: "but, ſays he, how would he have "laugh'd at the literal ſtory of a ſerpent actually "ſpeaking and reaſoning, *&c.*

I ANSWER, That whatever *Cicero* might have thought of *Alexander*'s dream, the veneration I bear to his memory, will never allow me to believe, that he could have treated *Moſes*'s account of the ſerpent's ſpeaking, as a ſubject of ridicule. I mean, if he had well weigh'd, if he had throughly and candidly conſider'd it in all its circumſtances: tho' I own, it is neither eaſy nor ſafe to ſay, what that mortal's exceſſive vanity and manifeſt ignorance of the true nature of God, might inſpire him to do, who could think ſo weakly and unworthily of the Ruler of the world, as to imagine him incapable of puniſhing iniquity; if, in truth, he did ſeriouſly think ſo.

AND whereas this writer would have us believe, that *Joſephus* had but a low opinion of *Moſes*'s divine inſpiration, from ſome very temperate expreſſions of that hiſtorian's upon this head;----- This objection will, I think, vaniſh, to any man of ſenſe that conſiders when that *Jew* wrote, and to whom,---that he might with good reaſon think it expedient to abate from the rigour of truth, in ſome inſtances: the better to ſoften and accommodate what he had to ſay, to the prejudices of his readers. For that he thought juſtly, that is, highly, of the divine miſſion of *Moſes*, a late learned writer hath ſufficient-

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ly made appear, from ſeveral other parts of his writings; (ſee the reply *to the defence of the letter to Dr.* Waterland.)---- Tho', if this proof could not be produced, and *Joſephus* were juſtly liable to ſuſpicion in that point, 'tis evident, no mighty advantage could be drawn from thence in favour of infidelity; ſince, 'tis very poſſible, (as ſome learned men have obſerved) he might, at that time, have been oppreſs'd with doubts and difficulties, from the diſappointment of his people, in the completion of thoſe prophecies relating to the Meſſiah, (which were to be fulfilled about that time) in the ſenſe and manner their ſelfiſh vanity ſuggeſted.

WHOEVER conſiders this ſeriouſly, will ſurely find little credit or conviction in oppoſing any quotation from him, to the conſtant united ſenſe, of ſo many great and wiſe men, of ſo many different nations and intereſts, thro' ſo vaſt a ſeries of centuries.

DISSERTATION VII.

Some farther difficulties relating to the fall conſidered.

THE way being thus clear'd, I now proceed to anſwer ſome other difficulties that ariſe on this head. As, 1ſt.

IF *this ſentence upon the ſerpent, was deſign'd for Adam's conſolation, and as a ſtay of hope, that his ſeed ſhould deſtroy the power of ſatan, and be reſtored to the favour of God, Why was it ſo obſcurely delivered?*

The ſerpent's ſentence conſidered.

I ANSWER, That it was deliver'd in ſuch a manner, as ſufficiently ſuggeſted to *Adam*, a reaſonable hope of recovering in his poſterity, what he had loſt in his own perſon; and more evidence than this, neither the wiſdom nor the goodneſs of God exacted; eſpecially, ſince this obſcurity rather tended to raiſe his hopes, than to deject him: for when *Adam* heard that *the ſeed of the woman* was to deſtroy the evil ſpirit, he undoubtedly underſtood *Eve* to be that woman; and ſome iſſue of his, by her, to be that ſeed. This naturally tended, to revive him into a lively hope of the ſpeedy reſtoration of his loſt eſtate: and as naturally tended, to eſtabliſh a thorough reconciliation between him and his wife; becauſe, without ſuch a reconciliation, their hopes could not be compaſſed. Whereas, without this motive of amity, ſome contention on this occaſion had been inevitable; and poſſibly, the feud might otherwiſe have been carried on, to their mutual deſtruction; nay, probably, without this, the particular puniſhment denounced againſt *Eve*, would have made her cold in the buſineſs of a reconciliation; and, perhaps, to ſuch a degree, as totally to prevent it; eſpecially, when it muſt naturally begin with ſubmiſſion and patience on her part, who had been the cauſe of her husband's calamity.

NOW that they had lively hopes on this head, at leaſt, enough to ſupport them in a right ſenſe of religion, appears from *Eve*'s exultation at the birth of *Cain: I have gotten a man from the Lord*, ſays ſhe, *i. e.* I have gotten a man thro' the ſignal favour and mercy of God. Now this extraordinary exultation cannot be ſuppoſed to ariſe from the ſenſe of the bare privilege of bearing iſſue; for that privilege ſhe had in common with the meaneſt brutes; which ſhe could not but know before this time; and therefore her tranſport muſt ariſe, from

ſome

ſome proſpect of ſome extraordinary advantage from this iſſue; and that could be no other than the deſtruction of her enemy.

And ſuppoſing *Abel* to have been born after *Cain* had attained the age of manhood, as poſſibly he might; and after the hopes of *Eve* had languiſh'd, by obſerving the perverſe diſpoſition of her firſt ſon: Her diſappointment in theſe hopes, was, probably enough, the reaſon why ſhe called her ſecond ſon *Abel*, *i. e.* Vanity; concluding, from the little proſpect ſhe had, in that perſon, on whom ſhe had fixed her hopes, that no child of hers ſhould be the promiſed ſeed; and therefore it was vanity to expect it. But as *Cain*'s perverſeneſs, and untowardly diſpoſition, was probably the reaſon why ſhe deſpair'd of his being the promiſed ſeed: and, in that ſpirit of deſpair, called her next ſon's name *Vanity*; from the infirmity uſual with parents, to believe, that no ſon can equal the firſt; ſo there is reaſon to believe, that upon *Abel*'s diſcovering a better diſpoſition, as he grew up, and being afterwards accepted by God, in preference to his elder brother, her hopes again revived, that he was the promiſed ſeed. This appears highly probable, from her declaration at the birth of *Seth*; *And ſhe bare a ſon*, (ſaith the text) *and called his name Seth*; *For God*, ſaith ſhe, *hath appointed me another ſeed inſtead of Abel: Becauſe* (for ſo it is in the original) *Cain ſlew him*. From hence, 'tis evident, that ſhe took *Abel* to be the *ſeed*, till *Cain* ſlew him; and afterwards, when ſhe found that God had given her another ſon, diſtinguiſhed from thoſe then in being, by this remarkable character, that he was begotten *in the likeneſs of Adam, and after his image*, *i. e.* framed with that appearance of all thoſe advantages which *Adam* derived from the hand of God, far above any of his ſons (for this is the only rational interpretation of the text) ſhe then concluded, that this

was certainly *the ſeed*; and that God had given him to her to effect that, which *Abel* would have effected, if he had not been cut off by his Brother. Thus we ſee, that the obſcurity, in which it pleaſed God to foretel the deſtruction of the evil ſpirit, gave riſe to a ſucceſſion of happy hopes in the breaſt of *Adam* and *Eve*: who, if they had known that this happineſs was to be poſtpon'd for four thouſand years, would, in all probability, have inevitably fallen into the extremity of deſpair.

IF it be ſtill ask'd, *How the denunciation of enmity betwixt the ſeed of the ſerpent, and the ſeed of the woman, is fulfilled?*

I ANSWER, every way. For firſt, If you take the text in the *figurative* ſenſe, we know that as good men are in the ſcriptures called the *children of God*, ſo wicked men are called the *children of the devil.* And we have but too much proof of the implacable enmity of this wicked race againſt the *ſeed of the woman* to this very day. And if we had no other proof, their reſtleſs reſiſtance to the cleareſt evidence on this head; the neceſſity they lay us under of proving the ſame truths over and over again, a thouſand different ways, would ſure be a ſufficient demonſtration of it.

OR if the text be taken in a *literal* ſenſe, we ſee a ſtrong antipathy ſubſiſting between ſerpents and mankind to this day. Nay, this antipathy is ſo ſtrong, that, as the juices of the ſerpent are noxious to man, ſo *Ariſtotle* aſſures us, that the human juices are noxious to ſerpents: His expreſſion, on this occaſion, is very remarkable; he tells us, that the *human ſaliva is hoſtile to ſerpents*; an expreſſion ſo full, and pointed to the accompliſhment of this ſentence, that, if he had not wrote it more than three hundred years before the birth of *Chriſt*, he had certainly been

been treated by our adverſaries as a ſworn accomplice with *Chriſtians*, to prove the ſtrict completion of it: So fully do this great man's obſervations verify the very letter of the ſentence here denounced! So fully is this ſentence executed in every ſenſe! If you take it in the figurative ſenſe, our adverſaries themſelves evince the accompliſhment of it: If you take it in the literal ſenſe, this enmity is proved by the teſtimony of the moſt accurate obſerver of all mankind, who cannot eaſily be ſuſpected of conſpiring with *Chriſtians* to manifeſt the completion of it.

BUT *does the ſerpent feed upon duſt?*

IANSWER, moſt infallibly. Nor, perhaps, could he otherwiſe ſubſiſt in thoſe ſandy and duſty deſarts to which God has, in a good meaſure, condemned him; tho' commentators content themſelves with explaining this part of the ſentence, from the neceſſity he is under of eating his food on the ground, and ſo ſwallowing duſt with it; but if this is thought, by ſome, not ſufficiently to diſtinguiſh the curſe of the ſerpent from the natural condition of other creatures, it ſhould be remember'd, that a further and more diligent enquiry aſſures us, that he actually eats the dry, duſty earth *. And there is not the leaſt reaſon to believe, that any other beaſt in the world does feed in the ſame wretched manner, except the ſcorpion; who is alſo accounted, by *Celſus*, a kind of ſerpent. Nor is the point ſo clear in relation to the ſcorpion; tho' out of all doubt with regard to the ſerpent. So ſtrangely is the Sentence of God executed in every ſenſe, and in every part, to a tittle!

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* See *Bochart* and *Pliny* of ſerpents.

AND as the expreſſion of *licking the duſt*, ſignifies, according to the *Hebrew* idiom, the loweſt ſtate of depreſſion and humiliation to which an enemy can be reduced; 'tis not improbable, that this metaphor was taken from that ſtate of dejection and degradation, to which the ſerpent was now reduced in the preſence of *Adam*: And doubtleſs God ſunk the ſerpent into this abject condition, at that time, as a ſignificant emblem to *Adam* of that utter proſtration and ſubjection, to which his evil inmate ſhould be finally doom'd, by the *ſeed of the woman*; at that dreadful day, when (as the *Pſalmiſt* propheſied of him) *his enemies* ſhould *lick the duſt*, *Pſ.* lxxii. 9.

AND thus, having explained to you all the parts of the ſentence paſs'd upon the ſerpent, with the ſurprizing accompliſhment of it in all; I now proceed to explain the ſentence paſt upon the woman at the ſame time; which is as follows;

The woman's ſentence conſidered.

UNTO *the woman he ſaid, I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow and thy conception; in ſorrow thou ſhalt bring forth children: and thy deſire ſhall be to thy husband, and he ſhall rule over thee.*

SOME part of this ſentence may perhaps now ſeem no way ſtrange to us, who every day, ſee every part of it accompliſhed. And yet, a more accurate obſervation upon the condition of all other creatures, will make the accompliſhment of it aſtoniſhing, to every man that thinks: and therefore, to clear this prophecy of pain to the woman, we muſt obſerve, that it conſiſts of two parts; *firſt*, the pain or ſorrow of conception, or breeding: And *ſecondly*, the pain of child-birth. — As to the firſt of theſe, 'tis remarkable, that a woman is the only creature under heaven, that we know of, which has ordinarily any ſorrow from

from conception *.——If it be ask'd, How it can be known, that other creatures have no ſickneſs on the ſame occaſion; I anſwer, That we can judge of the ſickneſs and health of brutes, by as ſure indications, as of our own; tho' not always ſo certainly, in what part their diſtempers are ſeated. And to put us out of all doubt in the preſent caſe, we know, that other creatures are in more perfection of health, and ſtrength, and habit, after conception, than before. Whereas, 'tis the reverſe of all this with womankind. How miſerable their condition ordinarily is, on that occaſion, is ſufficiently known to every human audience. *Ariſtotle* mentions about ten vexatious maladies, of various kinds, which await them in that ſeaſon of ſickneſs: And *Pliny* begins his account of that matter in theſe very remarkable words: *Headachs, vertigos, miſts before the eyes, a loathing of food,* &c. *are the indications that a man is begun.* And as he begins it remarkably, he concludes it no leſs ſo, by obſerving, that the end of all this vexatious toil, is frequently defeated *by the ſnuff of a Candle.*

MORE than this; as if all the ſingular miſery of that wretched ſtate were not ſufficient, the woman's conceptions are multiplied. She is remarkably ſubject to abortions and falſe conceptions above all other animals in the world: And when her conceptions come to maturity, there is remarkably a greater mortality of her iſſue, than of that of any other creature; at leaſt, one half of her off-ſpring periſh, before they can anſwer the ends of their being; that is, before they attain the age of ſeventeen years: And as her grief on theſe occaſions, is more

* This *Ariſtotle* expreſsly affirms, and only excepts the inſtance of a mare conceiving by an aſs; and in general, where there is any thing monſtrous in the fœtus.——And, doubtleſs the caſe is the ſame where the fœtus ſuffers from any accidental hurt or diſtortion in the matrix.

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exceſſive than that of any other creature, in the letter of the ſentence, *Her ſorrow and her conceptions are greatly multiplied*, before ſhe anſwers the ends of Providence and ſociety.——And to crown all, ſhe brings her offſpring into the world (which was the ſecond part of the puniſhment denounced againſt her) with remarkably more pain than any creature upon the face of the earth. And if *Ariſtotle*, the beſt obſerver in the world, did not aſſure us of this (as he does) our own obſervation could not fail to do it. Nay, common ſenſe muſt teach us, that if other creatures were expoſed to equal pain and danger on theſe occaſions, all our care would ſcarce be ſufficient even to preſerve the ſeveral ſpecies in being; and much leſs to preſerve them in any number ſufficient to anſwer the ſeveral ends of life.

So ſingularly, ſo emphatically true is that part of the woman's puniſhment alſo, *in ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth children* *.

Now I would ask every candid and reaſonable man upon earth, How this comes to paſs? They will not, I preſume, arraign Almighty God of incapacity to form woman in more perfection, or ſubject to leſs infelicity in this point; and, if they will not, 'tis evident that unleſs all this infelicity be the effect of a curſe, and in puniſhment of guilt, human nature is unequally dealt by: In a word, this miſery muſt be the effect either of hard treatment, or juſt puniſhment; there is no medium. Now the infinite goodneſs and perfection of the Divine Nature will not ſuffer us to ſuſpect him of the former imputation; and therefore all this miſery muſt demonſtrably be

* This is the more remarkable, inaſmuch as ſeveral circumſtances in her Make, naturally promiſe more eaſe to her, in this caſe, than to any other animal.

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the effect of a curſe; a juſt curſe upon *Eve*, entailed by her on her daughters.

AND here I muſt once more put a plain queſtion to our adverſaries, as I already did on another occaſion, and may perhaps have more occaſion to do, in the courſe of theſe enquiries. Do they know, that this miſery, which awaits women in conception and child-birth, is demonſtrably the effect of a curſe? If they do not know it, I muſt own, I cannot yet think them the *wiſeſt* men in the world: but if they do know it, and yet deride *Chriſtians* for believing it; the glory of being the *wickedeſt*, can, I think, ſcarcely be conteſted with them *.

The latter part of the woman's ſentence conſidered.

AND the ſubſequent part of her puniſhment is in the ſame analogy: *Thy deſire*, or, (as it is in the original) *thy appetite ſhall be to thy husband, and he ſhall rule over thee*, i. e. foraſmuch as you have indulged yourſelf in this inſtance, without the advice or conſent of your husband, (which ſurely ſhould not have been done in a point of ſuch importance) you ſhall from henceforth depend upon the will of your husband, and he ſhall have dominion over you.

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* As this offence of eating the forbidden fruit introduced irregularity of paſſion and appetite; and particularly, that appetite which is to this day moſt predominant in human nature, it pleaſed God to leave this memorial of it upon the woman, who was firſt in the offence.—Now that it had this effect, appears, as from other proofs, ſo, I think, fully and clearly from the covering which *Adam* and *Eve* made uſe of ſoon after their offence; for there is no imaginable reaſon for that covering, but one; and that one ſufficiently demonſtrates, that irregularity and violence of appetite, independent of the dominion of reaſon, was the effect of their offence. And foraſmuch as this offence began in *Eve*, what could be a more proper puniſhment of it in her, or a more certain memorial of that puniſhment to the end of the world, than the miſery which ſhould attend the indulgence of that appetite in herſelf, and in her daughters, from generation to generation.

And

And, I believe, they, who are moſt concerned in this puniſhment, (and ſurely a ſevere puniſhment it is, to have their wills perpetually ſubject to the will of others) will not deny, that they feel the ſevere effects of it over the face of the whole earth at this day.

AND that this ſubjection in the woman, is the effect of a curſe, conſequent to that offence which wrought our fall, is evident: Becauſe, on ſuppoſition that human nature were in a ſtate of perfection, where reaſon ruled, andperverſeneſs had no place, there ſeems to be no imaginable reaſon, why one ſex ſhould be in ſubjection to the other. And accordingly we find, that the woman was given at firſt under no other character, but that of a companion; becauſe *it was not good for man to be alone*; nor did *Adam* conſider her under any other character: for, when he excuſes his offence to Almighty God, by charging it upon his compliance with *Eve*, he ſays, *The woman, whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* ---- The woman, whom thou gaveſt to be *with me*, i. e. whom thou gaveſt to be my aſſociate and companion: ---- without the leaſt hint of ſubjection, or dependency. Nor was there the leaſt reaſon for any in that ſtate, as I ſhew'd before.

The ſentence paſſed upon *Adam*.

I COME now, in the laſt place, to the ſentence denounc'd upon the man; which needs little explication. He is doom'd to a condition of perpetual ſlavery, for obeying his wife, rather than his Maker; the earth is curſed for his ſake, and (inſtead of the delicious fruits of paradiſe) he is doom'd to eat of it in that accurſed ſtate: and confined to the herb of the field, in common with the brutal herd; till death reduce him to the common duſt, from which he was form'd.

THE wiſdom, the goodneſs, and the juſtice of God are ſufficiently conſpicuous throughout this whole

whole ſentence; more eſpecially in theſe three inſtances:

Firſt, In decreeing, that toil and drudgery ſhould be the conſequence of departing from an eaſy and a rational obedience: which hath been the curſe and puniſhment of all his poſterity, in every inſtance of diſobedience to their Maker, from that day to this.

Secondly, In making the earth leſs deſirable to man, when his guilt had reduced him to a neceſſity of leaving it. And that alſo is yet done in the train of calamities and ſickneſs, which for the moſt part makes life a load, before its laſt period, and death deſirable.

And *thirdly*, In keeping thoſe appetites and paſſions which had now broke looſe from the reſtraint of reaſon, within ſome bounds, by ſubduing their impetuoſity with hard labour; which unſubdued, or ſupported in luxury and idleneſs, would run riot; and make himſelf, and every body about him, miſerable. As it is ſeen among his ſons at this day.

And, to preclude man from all poſſibility of reverſing any part of this ſentence, we are aſſured that he was, ſoon after this, ſent out of paradiſe, and debarr'd from the tree of life. This caution the wiſdom and goodneſs of God exacted; foraſmuch as, when ſin had entail'd calamity and corruption upon human nature; in that condition, to perpetuate life, would be to perpetuate miſery.

And now, upon the whole, What is it that infidelity hath to object, with any degree of clear unprejudiced reaſon, againſt this account of the creation and fall of man? --- Was he created in that condition, and under thoſe circumſtances, which the trueſt wiſdom, muſt, upon the beſt principles of philoſophy, the cleareſt dictates of reaſon, and the fulleſt

fulleſt conviction of experience, pronounce upon the whole, moſt eligible, and moſt advantageous? ---- And what would he more?

If the wiſeſt man that was born into the world, had his own ſituation and circumſtances of exiſtence in his choice, could he form to himſelf a wiſh beyond the advantages of *Adam* in paradiſe? ---- To come into the world, in the full vigour of ſtrength, health, and reaſon; with a ſoul ſuperior to the tyranny, or even the temptation of appetite; and a body impaſſible to the injuries of weather! privileged from diſeaſe and death! unincumber'd with cloaths, and yet unconſcious of ſhame, the companion of guilt! encompaſſed with all the delights of ſenſe, and filled with all the joys of innocence! ſo very happy, as not to be acquainted with evil! a circumſtance which human wiſdom would have deem'd a defect: and conſequently, a condition of happineſs, which nothing but inſpiration could teach! above the invention of the greateſt genius that ever was born into the world!

Man, without ſin, was without miſery; tied to no more toil than reaſon, and uſe, and a philoſophick enquiry into the nature of things exacted; ---- free from all vexatious remembrances of the paſt, or anticipations of future evil! ---- Nothing but happineſs, in poſſeſſion, or in proſpect! a whole creation ſubmitted to his dominion, and enſured to his poſterity! an inexhauſtible ſupply of entertainment for every organ of ſenſe, and every faculty of ſoul! with one companion, to ſhare, and double every enjoyment; and both, as fully furniſhed with means to communicate happineſs, as fitted to receive it, ---- without any interruption from mortal infirmities, or allay from paſſion and perverſeneſs.

A SCENE! where the preſent vanities of life could have no place; ---- where palaces (the inventions of pride and infirmity) would be but incumbrances upon earth, and interruptions from heaven! where pomp and pageantry, could they be conceived, muſt at the ſame inſtant be deſpiſed; deſpiſed for what they are, ſpecious folly!

O *Adam*, beyond imagination happy! uninterrupted health! untainted innocence! nor perverſeneſs of will, nor perturbation of appetite! a heart, upright! a conſcience, clear! a judgment, unclouded! a glorious world, ---- an univerſe, ---- to contemplate! to enjoy! ----- And the Author of that univerſe, the ſource of all exiſtence, his God, his Creator, his Benefactor, ---- to bleſs, to glorify, to adore, to obey.

AND now, What have mortal vanity and weakneſs to object to this condition, and this account of the firſt man? ſince it is evident, that if man ever came into the world, he muſt come into it, under moſt of theſe circumſtances: ---- and if ever he came into it, in a way entirely worthy of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, he muſt come into it, under them all.

THIS was a creation, and a ſtate of things, worthy a God; ---- and this account of his creation, worthy of a writer inſpired by God; — inſpired to convey it, in all that ſimplicity and ſtrength, and in conſequence of both theſe, that ſublimity of ſtile, that beſt became a being, who knew his works above embelliſhment! the ſubject ſupported its own dignity, and was incapable of any acceſſion from human wiſdom, or the arts of eloquence; and all the exceptions that ever were, or ever will be made to it, will in the end be found the effects of human blindneſs and depravity; the neceſſary conſequences of that very fall,

fall, (of *Adam*) which we all feel, and yet have the folly and the front to diſpute.

BUT *why did he fall from this felicity?*

ASK rather, vain man, Why he was a creature? Why he was dependent of his Creator? And why he was ameneable to him? Had he been incapable of error, and ſuperior to temptation, he had been God; — had he been independent, he had been no creature; —— and had he been unaccountable, he had been irrational, and independent; — and could we ſuppoſe ſuch an abſurdity, as an independent creature, can we imagine it would be a happy circumſtance of exiſtence, to an intelligent being, of limited powers, to be exempted from the guidance, and protection, of infinite wiſdom, and unbounded power? And if duty and dependence be the neceſſary conſequences of creation, muſt not chaſtiſement or annihilation, be the neceſſary conſequence of diſobedience to the commands of that great Being that governs the world? — And is not any penalty, leſs than annihilation, an act of mercy? And is not a new trial, under a capacity of recovering more, even by an imperfect obedience, than was forfeited by a deliberate diſobedience, an act of the higheſt mercy imaginable *?

BUT *how could Adam fall, by eating an apple?*

TELL me rather, arrogant queſtioner, (whoever thou art) How he could fall otherwiſe? Could he

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* And that this is the caſe of *Adam*, and all his deſcendants, can be no doubt with any *Chriſtian* of an enlarged mind; who believes *Jeſus Chriſt* to be *the Lamb ſlain* for the ſins of mankind, *from the foundation of the world*. — For why he ſhould be conſidered as ſlain from the foundation of the world, unleſs his death was of univerſal uſe from that period, is, to me I own, inconceivable; and I am very ſure that St. *Paul's* epiſtle to the *Romans* juſtifies me in this opinion.

fall

fall but by diſobedience? and where could he diſobey but in relation to ſome reſtraint of natural liberty? And is there a created intelligence, whoſe natural liberty ſhould not be reſtrain'd? And what natural liberty ſhould our firſt parents be reſtrain'd in, except that, where indulgence would be fatal? Should they not be reſtrain'd from their own deſtruction? Had moral reſtraints, ſtrictly ſpeaking, (the idle objection urged by infidels *) any place in paradiſe? Moſt certainly they had not.

How *then could man be in more perfection than now? Was not this an act of intemperance? and as weak a one as any of his poſterity hath ſince fallen into?*

I ANSWER, It was intemperance; but it was more intemperance of knowledge, than food: — A circumſtance ſingly ſufficient to eſtabliſh the credit of the *Moſaic* hiſtory; for tho' *Moſes* is ſhort upon the ſubject; yet, whoever conſiders the point, with any comprehenſion, will find that *Adam* and *Eve* were inacceſſible, at leaſt impregnable, to temptation, any other way. — They can ſcarcely be imagined capable of one wiſh without their reach, except that of wiſdom: And the intemperance of that very wiſh (which infidels have urged as an argument of infirmity equal to ours) is to me, I own, a proof of ſuperior perfection; for knowledge, is always deſirable, in proportion to the light and extent of the underſtanding that ſeeks after it; and therefore every ſuperior degree of intelligence, ſhort of infinite, muſt have proportionably a ſuperior deſire of knowledge. — This the tempter well knew, (probably, by woful experience) and adapted his wiles to

* See the conference with a theiſt, — and Sir *Walter Raleigh*'s Hiſt.

this infirmity, with admirable addreſs. — He ſaw *Adam* and *Eve* every way ſuperior to the brute world, (and I am perſuaded the very brutes were not then unruly in their appetites) — and therefore a temptation to them (*Adam* and *Eve*) from mere appetite (could any have been offer'd) had been a weakneſs contemptible in a mere ſerpent? * but a temptation to be made like to God in knowledge, was a temptation to excellence, which no limited intelligence could be proof againſt, (and muſt always be ſtrong in proportion to the extent of that intelligence): and what could be ſo ſtrong a deluſion, to hope this from the fruit of a tree, as *Eve*'s ſeeing a brute become rational, as ſhe thought, by the vertue of that very fruit? — And that this was the cauſe of her deluſion, I have already proved, to the evidence of an axiom.

AND doubtleſs the ſtrength of this deluſion, was a main reaſon with their Creator, to receive the laps'd pair into mercy; notwithſtanding their deliberate violation of an expreſs command, immediately given them by himſelf; a circumſtance, which, without abatement from the greatneſs of the temptation, had rendered their diſobedience utterly unpardonable.

UPON the whole, What can make more for the truth of any revelation, than that every real difficulty, every ſeeming abſurdity, every tittle objected to it by infidelity, is found, upon a full enquiry, to be a new evidence and confirmation of its truth?

LET infidels then object, and let believers be undiſmay'd! (I had almoſt ſaid, Let them rejoice) in

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* This rightly conſidered, the allegorical interpretation of the ſerpent's being the ſymbol of pleaſure, *&c.* will be found altogether ſenſeleſs and abſurd.

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full aſſurance, that every objection to the truth of divine revelation, will end in new evidence for it.

DISSERTATION VIII.

Of Sacrifices.

THE next interpoſition of the Divine Being, which we meet with in the Scriptures, is, in the cloathing of *Adam* and *Eve*; and ſoon after follows an account of his acceptance of *Abel*'s offering, and his non-acceptance of *Cain*'s; — from whence men have been generally led to believe, that ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution. Let us then examine what evidence can be collected, either from ſcripture or reaſon on this head, and then ſee whether they both lead to the ſame concluſion.

IN *Hebrews* xi. 4. the author of that Epiſtle tells, that *by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet ſpeaketh.*

NOW the ſacrifices here referred to, are evidently theſe, of which *Moſes* gives us ſome ſhort account in the fourth chapter of *Geneſis*, where he tells us, that *in proceſs of time, Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he alſo brought of the firſtlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had reſpect unto Abel, and to his offering: but unto Cain, and his offering, he had not reſpect.* He then proceeds to tell us, that, upon this preference, *Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord ſaid unto Cain, Why art thou wroth?*

And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doeſt not well, ſin lieth at the door.

IN theſe words it is plainly implied, that *Abel* acted well, *i. e.* righteouſly, in the buſineſs of his ſacrifice; and that *Cain* acted not well, *i. e.* unrighteouſly, in the buſineſs of his ſacrifice; and that in conſequence of this defect, ſin lay at his door.

NOW this righteouſneſs in *Abel*, by which he obtain'd the preference to his brother, the apoſtle aſcribes to his Faith.

BY *faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous, God teſtifying of his gifts.*

HERE we ſee, that, according to the ſcripture account, the firſt act of worſhip, which God accepted with open marks of approbation, from the foundation of the world, was a ſacrifice; in which the life of one of his creatures was devoutly offered up to him: and that what made it acceptable, was the faith of the offerer; by which he obtained an atteſtation from God himſelf, that he was righteous.

IN this account of the preference of *Abel* to *Cain*, are contain'd two points of doctrine, which are remarkably the objects of ridicule with the infidel world, above all the other duties of religion, that ever were enjoined under the *Jewiſh* or *Chriſtian* oeconomy.

THE firſt is, that ſacrifice was from the beginning acceptable to God: and the next, that faith made it ſo.

FOR

FOR ſome think nothing more abſurd, than to imagine, that God could ever be gratified or appeaſed by the deſtruction of his creatures. And, if this action could not, in its own nature, be acceptable to God, How could faith make it ſo?

NOW, to clear theſe objections, which, I own, are plauſible, let us firſt enquire how far reaſon can evince, that ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution; and ſecondly, what light the ſcriptures give us on that head: — and if both theſe evidently lead to one concluſion, —— our laſt enquiry muſt be, what ends were intended by Almighty God, to be ſerved by this inſtitution.

I. THEN, I am to enquire whether reaſon evinces that ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution. — And in order to clear this, we muſt have recourſe to one plain principle; or, in other words, to a plain truth, which no candid reader will, I believe, conteſt; which is this:

THAT whatever practice obtains univerſally in the world, for any conſiderable number of years, muſt obtain in it, either from ſome dictate of reaſon, or ſome demand of nature, or ſome principle of intereſt, or ſome powerful influence or injunction of ſome Being of univerſal authority.

NOW, that ſacrifices obtained univerſally, for many ages, over all the regions of the known world, I believe, will not be denied by any man, who makes the leaſt pretence to the knowledge of antiquity. And, that the practice did not prevail from any dictate of reaſon, the adverſaries of revelation will, I believe, readily own; it being evident, that unprejudiced reaſon never could dictate, that deſtroying the beſt of our fruits and creatures, could be an office acceptable to God, but quite the contrary. Alſo, that it did not prevail from any demand of nature, is

undeniable: for, I believe, no man will ſay, that we have any natural inſtinct or appetite to gratify, in ſpilling the blood of an innocent, inoffenſive creature upon the earth; or burning his body upon an altar. Nor could there be any temptation from appetite, to do this, in thoſe ages, when the whole ſacrifice was conſumed by fire; or when, if it were not, yet men wholly abſtained from fleſh; as there is all the reaſon in the world to believe, that, at leaſt, the religious part of them did for the firſt ſixteen hundred years from the creation. And conſequently, this practice did not owe its origin to any principle of intereſt; and ſo there could be no prieſt-craft in the caſe, during that period.

Also in after ages, the duty of ſacrificing belong'd to the father of the family; who was more intereſted in the well-being of it, than any other perſon whatſoever; and conſequently, could have no intereſt in creating an unneceſſary expence. And after this, when fathers grew up into princes, by the increaſe of their families; the prieſt-hood, we know, became an appendage of royalty: and ſacrifices were then alſo at the ſacrificer's own expence.

We alſo know, that libations, and offerings of ſeveral kinds, were the conſtant practice of private men in their own families; and that prieſts had no perquiſites from them; nor can they, with any colour of reaſon, be ſuſpected to have had any emolument of any kind, from this practice, in any region of the earth, till more than two thouſand years, from the firſt inſtitution of this rite. Tho', if they had, 'tis evident, that the advantages derived upon any particular ſet of men, from any practice, is far from being a proof, that ſuch a practice had no original foundation, but in the ſubtilty and intereſt of that particular ſet of men. In truth, the ſuppoſition is as abſurd, as any thing can well be imagin'd; and

will

will affect every profeſſion under heaven, as well as the prieſthood; from the prince upon the throne, to the meaneſt officer and artizan in the common-wealth. — Nay, in truth, will affect every profeſſion in the world, much more than the prieſthood: becauſe, that is the only profeſſion, which was originally diſintereſted, in the diſcharge of duty proper to it.

We own indeed, that orators in *Rome*, did plead the cauſes of their clients, in the flouriſhing ſtate of the common-wealth, without any ſuch fees as are now paid to pleaders amongſt us, on like occaſions: but this by no means clears them, either of the ſuſpicion or proof of being mercenary in that conduct; becauſe, *that* was the ſure and known way to the higheſt honours, and moſt profitable employments in the common-wealth. But the father of the family cannot be ſo much as ſuſpected of having any intereſt of any kind, in leſſening his own power, by leſſening his own property, in the buſineſs of ſacrifices; which was indiſputably the caſe. And therefore, the prieſthood, is the only profeſſion in the world, which is clear of all ſuſpicion of intereſt in the buſineſs of its profeſſion, for more than two thouſand years from its firſt inſtitution; at leaſt, if the prieſthood be allow'd as old as ſacrifices: and if it be not, 'tis plain that ſacrifices are not the invention of prieſt-craft.

And this obſervation ſhould, methinks, make any infidel, who had any remains of modeſty, bluſh for ſuch Inſults upon any order of men, as are demonſtrably founded in ignorance and untruth. Since it is demonſtrable, that, if ſacrifices were the invention of prieſt-craft, prieſts practiſed their craft, to their own ſole detriment, for more than two thouſand years; which ſurely was a very ſtrange kind of policy. And, if ſacrifices be

two thouſand years older than prieſts, certainly it were ſomewhat hard to place the invention of them to the ſcore of prieſt-craft.

SINCE then ſacrifices are demonſtrably not the invention of prieſt-craft; nor the dictate of reaſon; nor the demand of nature; I ſhould be glad, that infidels would ſo much as attempt to tell us, with any colour of reaſon and proof, how they prevail'd ſo univerſally in the world, otherwiſe than from divine appointment? How any practice could obtain in the world, to which mankind, were neither urged by the intereſt and ſubtilty of any particular ſet of men, nor by any dictate of reaſon, nor by any inſtinct or demand of nature, nor by any intereſt of any kind; but quite the contrary, in direct contradiction to every principle of reaſon, and nature, and intereſt; (for the deſtruction of innocent and uſeful creatures, is againſt reaſon, againſt nature, and againſt intereſt): I ſay, how ſuch a practice could prevail, and prevail univerſally, is impoſſible to be accounted for, but from ſome powerful and irreſiſtible influence of example, or injunction of authority. And what example could have ſuch influence, except that of *Adam*, or what authority could have ſuch power, except that of God, is to me, I own, utterly inconceivable.

IF you ſay, ſuperſtitions prevail unaccountably in the world; I anſwer, That all ſuperſtition has its origin in true religion; and may, for the moſt part, be eaſily traced up to its true fountain. All ſuperſtition is abuſe; and all abuſe ſuppoſes a right and proper uſe. The very idea and definition of ſuperſtition, is, a ſuperſtructure of extravagance, and folly, and falſhood of ſome kind; and all ſuch ſuperſtructures neceſſarily ſuppoſe ſome foundation of regularity, and reaſon, and truth. This is the caſe even of little particular ſuperſtitious practices of particular times, and places: but where any practice is univerſal, there it muſt

muſt demonſtrably have ſome univerſal cauſe. And that, as I have ſhewn you, can be no other in the caſe before us, but either God, the founder of the world, or *Adam*, the founder of the human race; from whom it was derived to all his poſterity.

If infidels ſay this practice is from God, they then give up the point in diſpute; if they ſay, from the firſt father of mankind, (which is the only thing that can be ſaid with any colour of reaſon) the queſtion will ſtill recur, Why *Adam* practiſed a rite ſo cruel, and ſo contrary to reaſon and nature? Or why he ſhould propagate a practice to his poſterity, which he could not but know, would be ſo detrimental to them, as the regular, annual deſtruction of the very prime of all the creatures, that would be moſt uſeful to mankind, to the end of the world?

We ſee, indeed, that ſome parents are now, weak, and wicked enough, to encourage their own vices and extravagancies in their iſſue; (tho' the greater part, even of weak and wicked parents, take the quite contrary courſe): but then, where they do countenance their own faults and follies in their children, it always is, in ſuch inſtances, as carry pleaſure, or profit, or advantage of ſome kind along with them; and the reaſon of this is not hard to be diſcern'd. Sometimes they think the practice of their children a plea for the ſame practice in themſelves; at other times, they are urged to this conduct, from the hopes of conveying the pleaſures, or profits, or advantages of thoſe practices to their children, without the evils they themſelves ſuffered from them: they flatter themſelves, that their iſſue, warn'd by the example of the father's miſcarriages, may obtain every thing deſirable in their iniquity, with more ſecurity: but ſacrifice was ſuch a practice, as, unleſs enjoin'd by the authority of God, muſt of neceſſity be detrimental; without any proſ-

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pect of pleaſure, or profit, or advantage of any kind. And therefore, unleſs *Adam* was worſe than an ideot, it was impoſſible he could enjoin his poſterity ſuch a practice, from any other motive than divine authority: or, if he had, it is unimaginable why they ſhould univerſally obey him, from any other motive; unleſs they alſo were ideots for two thouſand years ſucceſſively. Which ſurely it will ill-become the advocates for the ſtrength and ſufficiency of human reaſon, to admit. —— Nay this is not all: for it will follow, that the *Egyptians*, and *Greeks*, and *Romans* were likewiſe worſe than ideots, in their turn; that the whole heathen world were brutes and monſters for two thouſand years more, in the practice of this very rite: Nay, they actually are ſo, to this day. In a word, either this rite had ſome foundation in true religion, which ſway'd the whole world to the practice of it for four thouſand years, and yet ſways the heathen part of it to this day; or elſe, this boaſted principle of reaſon, which could ſuffer men to go on in a train of ſuch abſurdity, and barbarity, for four thouſand, nay, for ſix thouſand years together, is a very bad and inſufficient guide. One of theſe poſitions, is indiſputably true; if the latter is admitted, then revelation was abſolutely neceſſary, to reform and to inſtruct the world, at the time that *Jeſus Chriſt* came into it: if the former, then ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution. Which was the thing to be proved. ---- Let the adverſaries of revelation, take which ſide of this dilemma they like beſt.

And thus, having ſeen how far reaſon evinces ſacrifices to be of divine inſtitution, I now proceed to enquire what light the ſcripture gives us upon that head.

And firſt, I ſhew'd you, in the introduction to this diſſertation, that God gave *Abel* ſure proof of his

his acceptance of his ſacrifice; and alſo gave teſtimony of his having done *well*, in that act of adoration. And from hence I clearly infer, that ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution. For, 'tis certain, that the deſtruction of an innocent creature, is not, in itſelf, an action acceptable to God; and therefore, nothing but duty could make it acceptable: and nothing, but the command of God, could make it a duty, in the caſe before us. We know, that no being has any right to the lives of the creatures, but their Creator, or thoſe, on whom he confers that right: and 'tis certain, that God had not yet given man a right to the creatures, even for neceſſary food; and much leſs, for unneceſſary cruelty. And therefore, nothing, but his command, could create a right to take away their lives.

'Tis alſo evident, that killing an innocent creature, cannot, in its own nature, be properly ſaid to be doing *well*. And therefore, ſince *Abel* is acknowledg'd by God to have *done well*, in killing the firſtlings of his flock in ſacrifice, 'tis evident, he muſt have done this, for ſome very good and juſt reaſon; and what reaſon could juſtify him in doing it, but the command of God?

In truth, no action is juſt or good, otherwiſe than as it is conformable to the will of God, either reveal'd, or eſtabliſh'd in the nature of things: And that this action was conformable to the divine will, could only be known by revelation, *i. e.* by being commanded. And therefore the rectitude of it, in *Abel*, could only ariſe from obedience. And, that obedience could juſtify it, can be no doubt to any man, who knows, *that obedience is more acceptable with God than ſacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams*, 1 Sam. xv. 22.

Again;

AGAIN; the apoſtle aſſures us, that *Abel* offer'd a more excellent ſacrifice than *Cain*, by faith: And what this faith is, he explains in ſome following inſtances. For example, he tells us, that *Noah prepared the ark, by faith*; ---- that *Abraham, by faith, left his own country, and went not knowing whither*; ---- and that *Sarah, by faith, received ſtrength to conceive ſeed.*

NOW we know, that *Noah* built the ark by the expreſs command of God; and with aſſurance from God, that he, and his houſe, ſhould be ſaved from that deſtruction, which was coming upon the reſt of the world. We are aſſured, that *Abraham* left his country and kindred by the expreſs command of God, and went into a country, which God had aſſured him, he ſhould receive for an heritage. What was then the faith of *Noah*, and the faith of *Abraham*, but obedience to the commands of God, and a firm truſt and confidence in the aſſurances he gave them, however ſeemingly improbable and unlikely to be fulfilled? And what was *Sarah*'s faith, but a firm dependence upon God, for the performance of a promiſe, naturally impoſſible to be fulfilled? And can we have any doubt that *Abel*'s faith alſo conſiſted in obedience, and an aſſurance of being acceptable by that obedience, tho' in an act of duty, otherwiſe moſt unlikely to be pleaſing to God? as that of the deſtruction of his innocent creatures, certainly was. An action, than which, nothing could be more, in appearance, ill fitted, to appeaſe the divine wrath, or obtain the divine favour. And yet, a ready obedience to that great Being, who commanded it, made the action and the actor righteous. And 'tis evident, nothing but ſuch a faith, as prompted *Abel* to that obedience, ever could make ſuch an action acceptable to God, in any man whatſoever, from the foundation of the world.

BUT here it may be objected, *that Abel's ſacrifice might be accepted, merely becauſe he was a good man; and Cain's rejected, becauſe he was an ill man.*

I ANSWER, That as this is a ſcriptural fact, we have no way to judge of it, but from the lights left us in the ſcripture.---- Now, from the accounts left us of ſacrifices in the ſcripture, we find, that offerings of fruits, were ſacrifices of thankſgiving; and offerings of creatures upon the altar, were ſacrifices of atonement for ſin; (nor were fruits accepted in atonement, except in caſes of extreme poverty, *Lev.* vii.) Now 'tis evident, that all men have ſins to be atoned, as they have divine favours to be acknowledged; and that atonement ſhould naturally precede acknowledgment, as the foundation of all other religious duties ſhould be laid in repentance; ſince no office of devotion, can be acceptable with God, without a precedent reſolution of amendment in the offender; from hence it was, that by the *Moſaic* law, confeſſion was to precede the treſpaſs offering, *Levit.* v. If Men expect to be accepted of God, they muſt *offer the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs*; and there is no righteouſneſs without repentance.---Now *Abel*, tho' a better man, offer'd ſuch a ſacrifice, as plainly implied a conſciouſneſs of guilt, which called for atonement; and conſequently, his, was a ſacrifice of repentance; confeſſing guilt, and imploring pardon; and as ſuch, was accepted of God.--- Whereas *Cain*, tho a worſe man, expected to be accepted, without repentance, or atonement.--- And this ſeems to me very clearly implied in God's anſwer to him; *If thou doeſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doeſt not well, ſin lieth at the door*; i. e. If you are righteous and unſinning, you ſhall be accepted, as ſuch, without ſacrifice; ——— but if you are unrighteous, ſin lieth at your door, and muſt lie there, till it is removed by repentance and atonement,

atonement, (doubtleſs, ſuch atonement as God himſelf had before appointed.)

BUT it may be farther objected; *If Moſes knew that ſacrifices were originally inſtituted by God, with manifeſt marks of acceptance, as in the caſe of* ABEL,--- *Why did he not give a clear, diſtinct account both of the inſtitution, and the manner of acceptance?*

I ANSWER, Becauſe ſuch a relation was unneceſſary. The *Jews*, to whom he wrote, knew very well, that their own ſacrifices were of divine inſtitution; and that God manifeſted his acceptance of them, upon the firſt ſolemn oblation after that inſtitution, by miraculous fire from the divine preſence, as we read in the 9th chapter of *Leviticus*; and they could have no reaſon to doubt, that they were ſo inſtituted, and ſo accepted from the beginning. Nor needed they to be then informed of a truth, which, doubtleſs, a clear, uninterrupted tradition, had long made familiar to them.

BESIDES this, there is reaſon to believe, that this rite was loaded with many additional ceremonies, at its ſecond inſtitution, under *Moſes*; in order to guard the *Jews*, from the infections of the heathen in this point; and therefore, it might not be proper to explain the matter more fully, to a rebellious people: who might think themſelves ill uſed, by any additional burden, of trouble, or expence, in this practice; however really neceſſary to their well-being.

AND thus, having ſhewn, both from reaſon and ſcripture, that ſacrifices were originally inſtituted by God, I proceed, in the next place, to enquire what ends were intended by Almighty God to be ſerved by this inſtitution.

Now

Now the true way to judge rightly of the wiſdom of any inſtitution, eſtabliſhed at any certain time, is, to conſider what was neceſſary, or expedient to be done, on ſuch an occaſion. And if the inſtitution is found to be well and wiſely fitted, to anſwer the exigences of the occaſion, then we may ſafely pronounce ſuch an inſtitution, wiſe, and well appointed.

Whereas then, reaſon evinces, that ſacrifices were inſtituted by God; and the ſcripture ſhews this to have been done ſoon after the fall: therefore, to judge rightly of the wiſdom of this inſtitution, we ſhould enquire, what was neceſſary to be done, as things then ſtood, between God and his creatures. And this will be beſt known, by enquiring, what was the condition of his creatures at that time.

In the firſt place then, we know, that *Adam* and *Eve* were now ſinners: receiv'd into mercy; but in danger of relapſing. Surely then it was neceſſary, that they ſhould have a ſenſe of their guilt, and of the mercy ſhewn them; and that they ſhould be guarded againſt the danger of relapſing ---- In the next place, 'tis certain that they had forfeited their lives, by their tranſgreſſion: and if ſo, was it not neceſſary, they ſhould be minded of the forfeit they had made, in order to a juſt and grateful ſenſe of the goodneſs of God in remitting it? ---- They were alſo now, naked, and infirm: both decency and health required that they ſhould be cloathed. ------- They were alſo doom'd to die, and to molder into duſt; as a puniſhment of their ſin. 'Twas ſurely fit they ſhould know the nature of their puniſhment, in order to judge from thence of the heinouſneſs of their offence; and in order to be better prepared to undergo it. ---- More than all this; God knew that they were to beget children, who ſhould inherit their own corruption, and infirmity. And certainly 'twas fit, that

that they alſo ſhould be early deterr'd from ſin; and have early monitions of the goodneſs and mercy of God.

ALL this was evidently expedient to be done at this time: (as ſhall be ſhewn more at large immediately): and if all theſe purpoſes of wiſdom and mercy could be effectually attain'd by any one inſtitution; certainly that inſtitution muſt needs be wiſe, and well appointed. --- Now we find one inſtitution appointed about this time, and but one; *viz.* that of ſacrifices. It remains then that we now carefully enquire, whether any, or all theſe ends could be attained by that inſtitution.

AND in order to do this more clearly, I muſt remind you, of what I obſerved in a former diſſertation, that a ſenſe of dependence upon God, was for *Adam*'s intereſt, even before the fall: and that ſome memorial of it, was neceſſary, in manifeſtation of that ſtate; and in order to keep up a conſtant ſenſe of it, in his mind. Now it a ſenſe of dependence upon the ſupreme Being, was neceſſary in a ſtate of innocence and perfection; ſurely much more in a ſtate of guilt and infirmity: when the guidance, aſſiſtance, and reſtraint, of infinite wiſdom, and almighty power, were much more wanted. In a ſtate of perfection, ſuch a memorial of dependence was evidently moſt proper for *Adam*, as was beſt fitted, to mind him, at once, of the felicity of that happy ſtate in which God had placed him, and the danger of loſing it. To this purpoſe, the tree of life, and the tree of death, were both plac'd full before his eyes; in a very diſtinguiſh'd and remarkable ſituation; as a ſure and conſtant monition, that God had placed life and death in his own choice; and that his happineſs, and miſery, depended wholly upon himſelf.

WHEN

WHEN man had forfeited his life, by his tranſgreſſion; and God, notwithſtanding, decreed to receive him into mercy; nothing certainly could better become the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, than the eſtabliſhment of ſome inſtitution, which might, at once, be a monition both of the mercy of God, and the puniſhment due to ſin; And foraſmuch, as God knew that man would often ſin; and ſhould often receive mercy; it was neceſſary, that inſtitution ſhould be ſuch, as might frequently be repeated; and in the repetition, frequently remind man, of his own endleſs demerit, and the infinite goodneſs of God to him.

AND what inſtitution could do this more fully or more effectually than that of ſacrifice for ſin? ſacrifice for ſin plainly teaching theſe two points.

1*ſt*, THAT every ſin was a forfeiture of the offender's life; And,

2*dly*, THAT notwithſtanding this, God would however have mercy on the ſinner; and accept of ſome other life, as a ranſom, in lieu of that forfeiture.

1*ſt*, I ſay, this inſtitution, plainly taught, that ſin was a forfeiture of life. For when it directed that a life ſhould be paid down upon every tranſgreſſion, what could be a clearer document from ſuch an inſtitution, than that life was the forfeit of tranſgreſſion? Now if life be actually the forfeit of tranſgreſſion, in every offender againſt God, 'tis evident, that an inſtitution, which carries that document with it, is, ſo far, well and wiſely appointed: on every occaſion, that ſuch a forfeiture happens to be made. And, that life is the forfeit of every offence againſt God, is evident; foraſmuch as being muſt manifeſtly be beſtow'd, upon reaſonable

creatures, under condition, of obedience to their Maker: Nor is it imaginable how God could beſtow it otherwiſe. And if being is beſtowed on condition of obedience, 'tis evident that diſobedience forfeits it. For, as God form'd intelligent creatures, for the attainment of happineſs, in conformity to that excellent order of things, which he ſo admirably eſtabliſh'd for the well-being of the whole: 'twas a neceſſary conſequence, from the wiſdom of that eſtabliſhment, that all voluntary deliberate departure from that order, ſhould be a forfeiture of being. For otherwiſe, it wou'd follow, that creatures had a right to continue in being, for reaſons, directly contrary to thoſe, for which they were firſt form'd; *i.e.* for reaſons inconſiſtent with wiſdom and goodneſs: ——— which is abſurd: — but at the ſame time, that reaſonable creatures, evidently forfeit their being, by diſobedience, yet certainly God may, if he pleaſes, continue it to them, for the ſame reaſons, for which he firſt conferr'd it; *i.e.* for the manifeſtation of his wiſdom and goodneſs. And ſince he determin'd to continue it to man, after his offence, nothing could be more reaſonable, than that he ſhould continue it, under ſome memorial of his own mercy, and man's demerit; for if there were no memorial kept up of the heinouſneſs of his offence, guilt would, from that moment, have no terror. And if guilt once loſt its terror with men, corruption would quickly carry them on to endleſs enormity; and then, man would continue in being, for ends, directly contrary to thoſe, for which he was preſerved by the divine mercy, from the death which he had incurr'd: (which the wiſdom and goodneſs of God could not allow:) And on the other hand, if there were no aſſurance of forgiveneſs, after tranſgreſſion, the effect would be the very ſame; for deſpair, would drive men, to the ſame extremes of tranſgreſſion, to which impunity would tempt them. — And therefore, both the wiſdom and the goodneſs of God, neceſſarily required ſuch

ſuch a memorial of mercy, on this occaſion, as ſhould at the ſame time ſtrike ſure terror into guilt: and what memorial could do this more effectually, than that, which demonſtrated life to be the ſure, fix'd forfeit of every offence? and ſince ſacrifices are fitted to effect this, beyond any thing we know of, 'tis evident, that the wiſdom and goodneſs of God are ſo far juſtified, in the inſtitution of them, at this time.

In the next place, *Adam* and *Eve* were now, not only naturally, but indecently, naked: 'Tis evident then in the firſt place, that decency requir'd they ſhould be cover'd; And beſides this, the inclemency of the air, added to the infirmity of nature which ſin had introduced, had now made cloathing neceſſary: ſince otherwiſe their life muſt ſoon have become miſerable; or rather muſt ſoon be deſtroy'd, without ſome better protection, than that of a few leaves. And ſince this exigence would likewiſe be fully anſwered by ſacrifices, which would yield them covering, from the skins of the creatures ſo ſlain; this alſo is a new evidence of the wiſdom of God in this inſtitution. Nor is there the leaſt reaſon to doubt, that the cloaths made for our firſt parents, by divine appointment, immediately after the fall, were of the skins of the creatures offered up to God on this occaſion; for there is no reaſon to imagine, that any of the beaſts, which were juſt made in perfection, ſhould die ſo ſoon; or would naturally die in many years after their creation. Nor was there any neceſſity that God ſhould ſlay them for that ſole end, when all the ends to be ſerved by their death would be fully anſwered in the ſingle inſtitution of ſacrifice: which I have now ſhewn, and will yet farther ſhew, to be in other reſpects wiſe and well appointed, at that very time. To proceed then,

We learn, from the command given, and the ſentence denounced againſt *Adam*, that death was the

penalty of his diſobedience: and ſince it was ſo, certainly it was highly proper that he ſhould know what he was to ſuffer; and conſequently, that he ſhould ſee death in all its horror and deformity; in order to judge rightly of the evil of diſobedience (and in order to be better prepared to undergo it). And what could ſhew this evil, more ſtrongly, than the groans and ſtruggles of innocent creatures, bleeding to death for his guilt, before his eyes, and by his own hands? Sights of this kind, are ſhocking to humanity even yet; tho' cuſtom hath long made them familiar; with what horror then may we imagine they pierced the hearts of our firſt parents? and how was this horror aggravated, when they conſider'd themſelves, as the guilty authors of ſo much cruelty to the beings about them?

NOR is this all; — this inſtitution was yet more extenſive in its influence. For ſince early impreſſions of the danger and horror of guilt, are the beſt ſecurities againſt ſin; nothing ſurely could be better fitted, to fix theſe impreſſions deep in the minds of children, than the ſad neceſſity of ſhedding blood, introduced by ſin: which it was eaſy for a prudent parent, to inculcate, and impoſſible for a pious parent, not to inculcate, on every occaſion of killing the creatures, in atonement for guilt. Eſpecially when he himſelf felt all that horror of iniquity, which he would impreſs upon his children, on that occaſion. And therefore this inſtitution, was not only wiſe and neceſſary, with regard to *Adam* and *Eve*, but admirably contriv'd, to convey an early abhorrence of ſin, into the minds of their off-ſpring, from generation to generation.

ADD to all this, that *Adam* was to be yet farther informed of death: and to this purpoſe, when the groans and ſtruggles of the dying animals were over, what ghaſtly and ſad ſights muſt the dead eyes, and cold

cold carcaſes of the creatures, yield him, before they were placed upon the altar; and in their aſhes after? How diſmal a meditation muſt it be, to conſider the beauty and excellence of animate beings, reduced to a handful of duſt? And what a ſhocking lecture of mortality, muſt the remains of thoſe creatures read to our firſt parents, in their ſeveral gradations, from corruption to duſt? eſpecially, when they could not ſee them in that ſad condition, but under the full aſſurance, that they themſelves muſt follow the ſame odious ſteps to deſtruction.

AND is it poſſible to conceive how God could ſtrike the human ſoul, with more ſenſe of miſery from guilt, or more abhorrence of the ſad cauſe of that miſery, than by this conduct? Such abhorrence of guilt, and ſuch a loathing of life, that if the mercy of God had not cauſed ſome ray of hope to ſhine thro' this ſcene of mortality and miſery, 'tis not to be imagined how *Adam* and *Eve* could bear their being; and therefore there ſeems to have been an abſolute neceſſity, that when ſacrifices pierced the heart of man, with ſuch dread, and deteſtation of guilt, and miſery, they ſhould at the ſame time be ſeals to ſome covenant of mercy, from God.

THAT God entered into a covenant of mercy with man, immediately after the fall, is evident from the ſentence paſt upon the ſerpent: in which, a covenant of mercy is neceſſarily implied. And can we doubt that ſacrifices were the ſeal of that covenant? eſpecially when mercy is ſo plainly implied in the very nature of the inſtitution; which teaches, that tho' life be the forfeit of ſin, yet God will, in mercy, accept another life in lieu of the offender's.

AND ſince reaſon evinces the neceſſity of ſome covenant of mercy at this time, Can any man in his ſenſes doubt the truth of thoſe ſcriptures, which give

us clearly to underſtand, that it was made? (How far the ſacrifices then offer'd, were types of *Jeſus Chriſt, the Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, is the buſineſs of another enquiry). We find that God's uſual way of ratifying covenants of mercy with mankind in after ages, was by ſacrifices; And can we imagine, that he fail'd to do ſo, when ſuch mercy was more wanted, than ever it was ſince the foundation of the world? and when ſuch an eſtabliſhment is demonſtrably one main reaſon of the very inſtitution of ſacrifices? Is it to be imagin'd, that God ſhould take care of the health of our parents bodies on this occaſion, and take none of the peace of their minds? Is it to be imagin'd, that God, ſhould ſoon after this, ſhew ſo much ſolicitude for an hardened murtherer, for ſo vile a wretch as *Cain:* and take none now, about two unhappy delinquents, oppreſſed with miſery, and at the point of deſpair? Had he ſo much mercy, ſoon after, upon one man; and would he have none now upon the whole race of mankind, yet in *Adam?*

BUT here it may be objected, that when the fleſh of animals was not eaten, their carcaſes were of no uſe; and ſo there was no detriment to mankind in ſlaying the creatures for ſacrifices; at leaſt, if they might preſerve their skins for cloathing, *&c.*

I ANSWER, That ſuppoſing the skin not deſtroyed in ſacrifice, (as it certainly was in ſome caſes under the law, and probably was ſo before), yet the deſtruction of the creatures was of manifold detriment; for as veſtments of hair and wool, ſoon ſucceeded the ruder coverings of skins; the annual growths of all ſuch creatures, as could be ſhorn, were of great emolument, even in the early ages of the world; eſpecially to that part of mankind, which led the paſtoral life, and dwelt in tents; and we find that *Abel*'s ſacrifice, was of creatures of this kind: --- and, 'tis probable,

bable, that creatures of other kinds, were as uſeful in caſes of carriage, as now, and more demanded; as the invention of more convenient vehicles hath now made a leſs number neceſſary for that purpoſe: nor is it improbable, that they were alſo of ſome uſe in tillage; eſpecially, ſince that occupation began, as early as *Adam*: ---- many of them alſo might, for ought we know, be uſeful for food: for milk might be eaten, when fleſh was not; ---- nay, their very carcaſes might be of as much uſe in culture, then, as now; they might alſo be the food of neceſſary domeſtick animals; or the food of creatures of carriage, as at this day among the *Arabs*.

AND this ſuggeſts another reaſon for the inſtitution of ſacrifices, *viz.* that ſin ſhould not go unpuniſh'd; but ſhould always be attended with ſenſible inconveniency. And the damage men ſuffer'd, in the creatures deſtroy'd in ſacrifice for ſin, was doubtleſs, at all times, a conſiderable inconveniency; eſpecially after the flood. Nor let any man regard theſe damages as trifles, ſince they were ſuch, in many caſes, as wiſe legiſlatures have put in ballance with a human life.

THE only difficulty now remaining, is, whether a command to deſtroy the lives of innocent creatures, be conſiſtent with the divine goodneſs and mercy.

BUT this will be no more a difficulty, when we conſider that their ſubſerviency to the ends of human life, is, as far as we can ſee, the ſole end and purpoſe of their being; and that it is their happineſs, upon the whole, to be ſubmitted to the dominion of man; and to be deſtroyed for his uſes; ſince they are by this means preſerved from weather, from want, and from one another; and relieved under diſeaſes and diſtreſſes of every kind: and foraſmuch as only a certain number of them can ſubſiſt conveniently

together, 'tis evidently their intereſt to be delivered by ſudden deſtructions, from more lingring and cruel deaths.

And thus, having ſhewn, that ſacrifices were of divine original; that faith only could make them acceptable to God; and that many ends of infinite wiſdom and mercy were, at once, ſerved by them: having alſo ſhewn, that there was an apparent neceſſity of God's making ſome covenant of mercy with *Adam* at this time; and that it is highly credible, he did ſo; I ſhall, with God's aſſiſtance, enquire in due time, how credible it may be, that the death of *Chriſt* was figur'd in that covenant; and was neceſſary to the redemption of the world, in conſequence of it.

In the mean time, I cannot, without indignation, reflect, upon the blind and inſolent vanity, of thoſe wretched mortals, who with ſuch blaſphemous and ſhocking temerity, ſet themſelves to ridicule every inſtitution of God, which the corruption, or narrowneſs, of their own heads and hearts, hath made them incapable of comprehending; Whereas, a very moderate degree of underſtanding, enlighten'd by a very moderate degree of learning and reflection, would naturally, and almoſt neceſſarily, teach them, the adorable wiſdom and goodneſs of every ſuch inſtitution: or, if it could not, yet a very ſmall portion of humility, might teach them, that every inſtitution of God, muſt be wiſe and good; tho' poſſibly above the reach of poor ſhort-ſighted mortals. The leaſt grain of humility could not but teach them, the infinite diſtance and diſparity between their own little, narrow, groveling conceptions, and that infinite extent of knowledge, eſſential to *the high and mighty One, that inhabiteth eternity:* who hath aſſured us by the mouth of his holy prophet, that *his thoughts are not our thoughts, neither our ways his ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are his ways higher*

higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.

To whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

DISSERTATION IX.

Concerning that corruption and degeneracy of mankind, which drew down the divine judgment in a deluge.

IN the ſixth chapter of *Geneſis*, and the third verſe, we find God ſpeaking in this manner, concerning the corruption and depravity of mankind: *And the Lord ſaid, My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man, for that he alſo is fleſh: yet his days ſhall be an hundred and twenty years.*

THESE words contain the determination of the divine juſtice, upon God's inſpection of that univerſal corruption which had over-ſpread the earth, ſome time before the flood.

THE methods he had hitherto taken to deter man from guilt, and to draw him to goodneſs, were now experienced to be ineffectual: (nor let any man quarrel with this way of ſpeaking; ſince, 'tis evident, that the beſt methods of infinite wiſdom, not controuling the liberty of free agents, may be defeated, or perverted, by degenerate beings, given up to the corruption of their own hearts, and the violence of unruly appetites): it remain'd then, that one method more ſhould be taken for their amendment. *Noah, a preacher of righteouſneſs*, is appointed to denounce the divine vengeance againſt their vileneſs, and to aſſure them, that the ſpirit of God would not always ſtrive with them, in the gracious methods of mercy and monition;

monition; but would proceed to wrath and vengeance, if they did not forſake their wicked courſes; and had now determin'd to allow them no more than a trial of one hundred and twenty years. In which time, if they did not amend, renounce their vileneſs, and return to their duty, they ſhould be deſtroyed by an utter and final exciſion from the earth. —— This is the common ſenſe of commentators upon the place, and, the then ſtate of things throughly conſidered, will, I believe, be found the moſt natural and proper interpretation of the words above recited.

As to the methods of mercy which God had taken for the amendment of mankind, before the flood was ſent to deſtroy them, I ſhew'd you in ſome former diſſertations, that a *Seed* was promiſed immediately after the fall; who ſhould ſubdue and deſtroy the power of that evil ſpirit, which had brought ſin into the world: a victory which could neither be attained or enjoyed without enmity to evil, and attachment to good. This naturally tended to inſpire all wiſe and good parents, with a ſtrong zeal of training up their children, with the utmoſt exactneſs, in all the ways of religion and virtue; ſince all their hopes, both for themſelves and their children, depended upon this rectitude of diſpoſition; without which, it was impoſſible that any of them, could be the promiſed *ſeed*; who was to reſtore the human race, to their original purity and perfection.

I also ſhew'd you, that ſoon after this, ſacrifices were inſtituted by Almighty God; as a means admirably fitted to inſpire mankind with a horror of guilt; and be at the ſame time a perpetual memorial of the divine mercy, from generation to generation.

Besides this, *Adam* liv'd to teach and to exhort his children, nine hundred and thirty years: and *Lamech*, the father of *Noah*, who died on the very year

year that God brought the flood upon the earth, was thirty years old when *Adam* died: and ſince we know from the ſcriptures, that *Lamech* was a prophet, there is no doubt but he alſo, as well as his ſon was a *preacher of righteouſneſs*, to mankind; till their ſins drew down their deſtruction. And from this ſhort account of that period, we may fairly collect, that the world never wanted either wiſe inſtitutions, or authentick teachers from God, to keep them in their duty, or deter them from evil, from the creation to the flood.

ADD to all this, that there is good reaſon to believe, that God exhibited himſelf to mankind, at that ſeaſon, by ſome ſignal manifeſtation of his preſence; as afterwards in the tabernacle, and temple.--- This ſeems ſufficiently implied in *Cain*'s complaint, of being driven from the divine preſence, upon the murder of *Abel*: for we cannot, with any ſhew of reaſon, believe him ignorant, that God was eſſentially preſent every where. And therefore, when he ſays, *Thou haſt driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face ſhall I be hid*; 'tis evident, that as by the *earth*, he only meant that particular region of the earth where *Adam* then dwelt; ſo, by the words *thy face*, he muſt only mean that peculiar, gracious exhibition of his divine preſence, which he there vouchſafed to mankind.

AND this very baniſhment, with that mark wherewith God had branded him as a murderer, was a ſignal monition to the whole race of *Adam*, that vengeance from God ſhould purſue ſin. And as he was baniſhed from that region where his father dwelt, 'twas a neceſſary conſequence of his exile, that he carry'd the ſame monition to his own poſterity; and preſerved it, in whatever region of the earth he ſettled after this time; *i. e.* he carried it to that region, where it is certain, it muſt have been moſt wanted, as being

ing moſt remote from the authority and influence of *Adam*. And as *Cain*'s puniſhment, was, at this time, a ſignal determent from vice, ſo *Enoch*'s exaltation to heaven, afterwards, (which from the reaſon of the thing and character of the man, doubtleſs was done in a very glorious and conſpicuous manner), was the nobleſt exhortation to piety and virtue, that can be imagined. And, at the ſame time, a ſure document to the world, that God had ample rewards in heaven for the righteous, *ſuch as eye had not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man to conceive.*

THUS much is obvious to be inferr'd, from the account left us in ſcripture, of the methods of mercy and monition made uſe of by the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, for the amendment of mankind, before the earth was over-whelmed with a deluge: but as that account is very ſhort, 'tis poſſible there might have been many other methods made uſe of to the ſame purpoſe, and probably there were; tho' 'tis certain, that even thoſe recorded in the ſcriptures, are abundantly ſufficient to vindicate *the ways of God with man*, during that period.

BUT when all theſe gracious methods, monitions, and exhortations, (whatever they were) were in the end found ineffectual, for the amendment of the world: I believe it will not be denied, that there was then a neceſſity of a new revelation, (in the uſual courſe of God's dealing with the ſons of men) antecedent to the utter deſtruction of this degenerate race: both to manifeſt his mercy, and to vindicate his juſtice, in the government of the world; to make it ſufficiently evident to all ſucceeding generations, that no means were left uneſſay'd for their amendment; and that nothing, but the laſt neceſſity, compell'd their Maker, to proceed to extremities with his creatures. ---- Whereas then, *Moſes* repreſents mankind, as in the laſt degree of degeneracy, before they were deſtroyed

deſtroyed by the flood, and at the ſame time, repreſents Almighty God, declaring *that his ſpirit ſhould not always contend with them*, but that however he would yet bear with them, for an hundred and twenty years; nothing ſurely can be more reaſonable, than to conclude from this account, that God gave them certain notice of his fix'd intention to deſtroy them, at the end of this period, if their amendment did not avert the judgment. And that he did ſo, is ſufficiently imply'd in that paſſage in St. *Peter*'s Epiſtle, where *Noah* is ſtil'd *a preacher of righteouſneſs*; added to the ſubſequent incidental obſervation, that the people of that period of time were diſobedient, *when the long ſuffering of God waited while the Ark was preparing*: this being conſidered, I think we can have no reaſon to doubt, that *Noah* was a preacher inſpired by the ſpirit of God, to warn the old world, of the divine vengeance hanging over their heads, at that time.

HAVING thus explain'd the full ſcope and intention of the divine declaration mention'd at the beginning of this diſſertation, I now proceed to enquire,

1*ſt*, BY what means human nature became ſo corrupt, in ſo ſmall a ſpace; *i. e.* in a ſucceſſion of ſo few generations as paſſed from the creation to the flood? corrupt to ſuch a degree as to lay God under a neceſſity of deſtroying them.

2*dly*, TO enquire by what means that calamity was brought upon the earth. And,

3*dly*, WHAT ends of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs were anſwered by it.

1*ſt*, THEN, I am to enquire how it was poſſible for mankind to become ſo utterly corrupt, in a ſucceſſion of ſo few generations, as paſs'd from the creation to the flood.

AND

And here I muſt own, that it is indeed ſcarcely imaginable, at firſt ſight, how man cou'd be ſo corrupt, under all the reſtraints from evil, and incitements to good, which God made uſe of to keep him within the bounds of duty, during that period. And yet the influence of the firſt tranſgreſſion, will, upon due reflection, but too well account for all this enormity.

As man is a being, made up of body and ſpirit, the one, paſſive and ſenſeleſs, the other, active and intelligent: 'tis evident the perfection of his nature, muſt conſiſt in the ſubjection of the body, to the dominion of the ſpirit: *i.e.* in a ſubordination of his organs and appetites to the dictates of right reaſon. It follows then, that, if, by any misfortune, the powers of his underſtanding ſhould be impair'd, or thoſe of his appetites inflam'd, he muſt from that moment become an irregular, imperfect creature; inaſmuch as the ballance muſt immediately turn in favour of the inferior appetites; which would often influence him to act in oppoſition to reaſon. And that either, or both theſe effects might be produc'd by eating the forbidden fruit, I have already ſhewn.

And as the indulgence of the appetites naturally tends to weaken the intellectual faculties, by taking off the mind from intellectual objects, and immerſing it in matter, and ſenſual purſuits; it ſeems a neceſſary conſequence from this condition, that man, left to his own liberty, or unreſtrain'd by ſome very extraordinary degrees of divine grace, muſt naturally degenerate into the laſt degree of corruption.

And what reſtraint conſiſtent with human freedom can be imagin'd ſufficient to check his unruly appetites, in that height of vigour, and confidence of long life? If all the dictates of reaſon, and terrors of religion, are unable to withhold men from blaſphemy, and violence, and villainy, even now, under all the

the diſcouragements of a ſhort and wretched life, rarely, and with great difficulty ſtretch'd out to a ſpan of 70 years; what can we conceive ſufficient to keep them back, in the ſtrength and ſecurity of ſin, for a continued ſeries of eight or nine hundred years? No interpoſition of providence can be imagin'd ſufficient for their amendment in theſe circumſtances: unleſs it were ſuch, as would either change their nature, or deſtroy their freedom; and therefore 'tis but too credible, that in about 1500 years from the creation, God found them degenerate to ſuch a degree, as if they had been mere brute beaſts; for that ſeems the moſt natural ſenſe of the text;---- *My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man; for that he alſo is* FLESH, i. e. 'Tis in vain to uſe any more methods of mercy, or monitions of wiſdom with man, who is now entirely given up to fleſhly appetites; and is by that means ſunk down into the loweſt condition of brutality:---- And ſoon after, *Moſes* aſſures us, that *God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man, was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually.* And this alſo is eaſily apprehended. For as the vanquiſh'd, naturally become ſlaves to the conqueror, ſo here, all the powers of the mind, being ſubdued to the dominion of the appetites, ſerved now to no other purpoſe, than to purvey for the pleaſure of their tyrants; and miniſter to all their unruly demands.

THIS extreme degeneracy, made it neceſſary to Almighty God, to root out the whole race of mankind from the earth, except one man and his family: which family, being yet but young, were preſerved from that degeneracy, by the example and influence of a righteous parent: for we are aſſured, *that* Noah *was a juſt man and perfect in his generations; and* Noah *walked with God*, Gen. vi. 9.

Now

NOW this deſtruction of the human race was, at once, an act of the higheſt juſtice and mercy. For, ſince God made man for ends worthy of his own infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; and ſince, by their diſobedience and degeneracy, they had utterly defeated the ends of their creation; lived only to purpoſes directly contrary to thoſe ends, and wholly deſtructive of them; liv'd only to rebellion and diſobedience to their Maker, and their own mutual miſery and deſtruction; nothing could better beſeem the mercy and the juſtice of God, than to cut off that corruption by an utter exciſion, which neither his reſtraints, nor rewards, nor all the monitions and exhortations of his prophets, added to his own declarations, inſtitutions, inflictions, and denunciations of vengeance, could reclaim, in the courſe of ſo many centuries.

BY what gradations men arriv'd to this height of corruption is not ſo clear from the ſcriptures; yet may, with much appearance of truth, be collected from them; ---- For beſides the general expreſſions in which *Moſes* deſcribes this degeneracy, there are two that ſeem to point out particular vices; both mention'd in *Gen.* vi. 11. *The earth alſo was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence*; ---- by *violence* is plainly meant cruelty, and outrage, and injuſtice of every kind: and by *corruption*, the *Jews* tell us, is always meant either idolatry, or abominable and unlawful mixtures and pollutions. And that the latter is here meant, is evident from this ſubſequent explication of thoſe words: *for all fleſh had corrupted his way upon the earth.* The queſtion then is, by what means both theſe corruptions came into the world? Now,

THE firſt inſtance of iniquity we meet with after *Cain*, is in *Lamech*, the ſixth in deſcent from him, incluſive. He introduced the corruption of polygamy into

into the world; which could not fail to introduce many others; ſuch as murder, adultery, and unnatural luſt: As is eaſy to be conceived, and ſhall be ſhewn more at large hereafter. And it is highly probable that he made his way to that crime by the murder of the husband or ſpouſe of one of his wives. This is not unnaturally collected from the very nature of his crime, added to that bitter exclamation of his to his wives in *Gen.* v. *Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my ſpeech; for I have ſlain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt*: — From hence 'tis evident, that he had committed murder (one murder at leaſt, if not more) and what cauſe ſo probable for his doing ſo, as the gratification of his luſt: eſpecially in an age of the world when there ſeems to be little occaſion of contention for any property, but that of women: The earth not being yet peopled, and the creatures doubtleſs in great plenty; — And why ſhould he call ſo emphatically to his wives, and complain to them under that particular character, unleſs they had, in that particular character, been ſome way or other the occaſion of that crying guilt? and and how they, as wives, could be the occaſion of that guilt, without any guilt of their own, (which they are not charged with) is not eaſy to be imagined upon any other ſuppoſition.

And this conjecture is ſtrengthen'd by reflecting, that there was an apparent neceſſity that mankind ſhould at firſt be propagated in a regular ſucceſſion of male and female, at leaſt in equal numbers of each ſex: and in that caſe, no man could pretend to a plurality of wives but by doing a manifeſt injury to ſome other: nor is it likely, that other would ſubmit to ſuch an injury without force. That *Lamech* had uſed force againſt ſome other man is evident; as alſo that he thought himſelf much more criminal in doing ſo, even than *Cain*: as appears from that exclamation (which, I think, hath not yet been rightly underſtood)

ſtood) *If Cain ſhall be avenged ſeven-fold, truly Lamech ſeventy and ſeven-fold*; Now the true reaſon why God mark'd *Cain*, and guarded him from deſtruction, under ſo ſevere a penalty upon any one that ſhould ſlay him, was demonſtrably this; that he might preſerve him as a living monument of the curſe of God upon murder.

For God himſelf aſſures us, that his brother's blood *cryed up from the earth*, for vengeance upon him: and accordingly we find that he was branded, he was baniſhed, he was emphatically curſt by God; and every portion of ground, he attempted to till, was peculiarly curſt for his ſake. And can we after this imagine, that life was left him for any other reaſon, than another curſe? And *Cain* himſelf was ſufficiently ſenſible that it was left him for no other reaſon: this appears from that bitter lamentation of his, *My puniſhment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou haſt driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face ſhall I be hid; and I ſhall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it ſhall come paſs, that every one that findeth me, ſhall ſlay me*; —— To this complaint God makes this reply, —— *Therefore* (or as it is better render'd, *for that reaſon*) *whoſoever ſlayeth Cain, vengeance ſhall be taken on him ſeven-fold*; i. e. For that very reaſon, becauſe your puniſhment is greater than you can bear, becauſe you ſhall be an exile, a fugitive and a vagabond —— a ſignal example of divine vengeance upon guilt — for theſe very reaſons, I will preſerve you, and ſet a mark upon you, that no man ſhall dare to ſlay you --- Now, on ſuppoſition that this was the reaſon of God's preſerving *Cain*, (and ſurely it will be hard to find another reaſon why that murderer was ſo ſignally protected;) I ſay, upon ſuppoſition that this was the reaſon, and that *Lamech* knew it (as he could not but know it) his exclamation to his wives is plainly a confeſſion, that he had been guilty of a much greater crime than *Cain*:

that

that he had murder'd from a much leſs pardonable motive, than preference in the favour of God (which was the caſe of *Cain*) and therefore concluded that God might juſtly render him a much more dreadful monument of his wrath, than he had render'd *Cain*; --- And in this terror, that bitter exclamation falls from him, *If Cain ſhall be avenged ſeven-fold, truly Lamech ſeventy and ſeven-fold.*

THE character of *Lamech*'s family makes this account yet more credible: One of his ſons being the inventor of muſical inſtruments, and the other an *inſtructer of every artificer in braſs and iron*; or, (as it is in the hebrew) *a whetter of every work of braſs and iron*, i. e. in the moſt rational interpretation of the words, an artificer of weapons of war. For the common inſtruments for tillage and building were invented long before ---- *Cain* had built a city before this; and 'tis ſcarcely imaginable how this could be done without ſome knowledge and uſe of metals ---- From hence 'tis reaſonable to believe, that as one of *Lamech*'s ſons invented inſtruments of luxury, ſo the other invented inſtruments of violence. And this is further confirm'd from the character of *Vulcan* with the heathen, who was certainly no other than this very *Tubal Cain*: and from the beſt accounts antiquity affords, in relation to this man's character, we have reaſon to conclude, that his buſineſs was, to forge inſtruments of violence and war.

AND as luxury naturally begets a diſpoſition to injure others in their property; and ſuch a diſpoſition, armed with offenſive weapons, naturally tends to beget all kinds of inſolence and outrage to our fellow creatures: all theſe conſiderations make it highly probable, that as *Lamech* had gratified his luſt (in polygamy) by force and violence; his example, in a race ſo armed, and at the ſame time remarkable for gigantick ſtature and ſtrength, (as we are aſſured many of the

ante-diluvians probably of that race were) might naturally enough introduce all that train of corruption, which drew God's judgments upon the earth.

And indeed, this ſeems ſufficiently evident from *Moſes*'s account of the matter: for immediately before he mentions the laſt degeneracy of mankind, he tells us, *that the ſons of God*, i. e. the deſcendents of *Seth*, (who called themſelves by that name, in contradiſtinction to thoſe of *Cain*, who, probably, in the heighth of their impiety, diſclaimed the divine original of man) *ſaw the daughters of men, and took them wives of all which they choſe*. ---- The plain ſenſe of which words, is this; that every man took to himſelf as many wives out of them as he lik'd: making his liking, the only limit and meaſure of the number. And when the righteous race of *Seth*, fell into this vice of polygamy, then followed an univerſal depravity. And accordingly, as ſoon as *Moſes* hath related this miſconduct of the ſons of *Seth*, he immediately adds, *And the Lord ſaid, My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man*; i. e. that it was in vain to oppoſe any more methods of mercy to this torrent of impiety; for the earth was then throughly corrupt, and filled with violence.

And as this is a natural account of this progreſs of evil, ſo it is probable, this outcry of *Lamech*'s was occaſioned by obſerving all that terrible train of iniquity, which his example had introduced into the world. For *Moſes* relates nothing of his lamentation, till after he hath told us of the birth of his ſons by both his wives; and the inventions of both thoſe ſons: and therefore, 'tis highly probable, he never ſaw his guilt in a true light, till he ſaw the dreadful effects of it in his poſterity, in his own poſterity at leaſt, if not in that of *Seth*'s alſo. And this might naturally enough make him lament his guilt to his wives; and in that lamentation, own, that he deſerved

ved vaſtly more puniſhment on that ſcore, from the hand of God, than even *Cain* himſelf.

AND thus, having ſhewn you how it was poſſible, and by what gradations it is probable, that iniquity increas'd to ſo monſtrous an height in the world, as to lay the divine juſtice and goodneſs under a neceſſity of deſtroying the human race by a flood: I now proceed to enquire, by what means that calamity was brought upon the earth.

DISSERTATION X.

Concerning the natural cauſes made uſe of by Almighty God to flood the earth.

AND here I muſt own, that ſuch an enquiry is matter of much more curioſity, than uſe; ſince this work was evidently miraculous. And they, who have attempted to account for it any other way, are found to have departed juſt ſo far from philoſophy and truth, as they departed from revelation. And therefore, omitting the ſeveral imaginations of men upon this head, I ſhall juſt trace that account of the matter, which is naturally and obviouſly deducible from the ſcripture; and is as follows;

MOSES tells us in the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, that when God created the earth, *darkneſs was upon the face of the deep, and the ſpirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* From hence 'tis evident, that the face of the *deep*, is the face of the *waters*; and conſequently, that the earth was cover'd with water, immediately after the creation: nay more, that theſe waters cover'd the face of the earth to a conſiderable depth, in the ſame manner that the ſea now covers ſome portions of it. For we find, that the waters,

which now cover'd the earth, are call'd the *deep*, which is the known expreſſion, by which the moſt profound part of the ſea is ſignified, in ſcripture; (as you may read in the fifty-firſt chapter of *Iſaiah* at the tenth verſe) and could with no propriety be us'd in this place, on this occaſion, if the waters had not at this time cover'd the earth to a conſiderable depth.--- And this reaſoning is fully confirmed from the 104th *Pſalm*, where *David*, deſcribing the power and wiſdom of God in the creation of the earth, makes uſe of this magnificent image; *Thou coveredſt it with the deep as with a garment: the waters ſtood above the mountains.*

After this, in the order of the creation, followed the diviſion of light from darkneſs; ---- and after this, the diſtribution of that water which was upon the earth, into two diſtinct regions; according to theſe words of *Moſes*. ---- And God ſaid, *Let there be a firmament in the midſt of waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters, which were under the firmament, from the waters, which were above the firmament: and it was ſo: And God called the firmament, heaven: and the evening and the morning were the ſecond day. And God ſaid, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was ſo*; ---- *and God called the dry land, earth*; *and the gathering together of the waters called he, ſeas*; *and God ſaw that it was good.* ---- And this operation alſo of the divine power, by which the waters were collected into one place, is nobly deſcribed by *David* in the forementioned *Pſalm*: — *At thy rebuke they fled*; *at the voice of thy thunder they haſted away*; ---- *they go up by the mountains*; *they go down by the valleys*; *unto the place which thou haſt founded for them*; ---- *thou haſt ſet a bound that they may not paſs over: that they turn not again to cover the earth.*

From

FROM this deſcription, a learned * commentator concludes, that when God had ſeparated ſo much water from the earth as he thought proper, by the interpoſition of the firmament, he prepared a receptacle for what remain'd, by breaking up a proper portion of the earth, with the violence of an earthquake, cauſed by the inflammation of nitro-ſulphureous matter pent up in it for that very purpoſe. And as the waters would, in that caſe, be firſt thrown up to an immenſe height, and then ruſh down impetuous into their hold, we may conceive an image of this ſcene, from that beautiful deſcription of the *Pſalmiſt*: *At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they haſted away,* ---- *they go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys:* ---- or rather, (as it is expreſs'd with infinitely more beauty and magnificence in the original), *they aſcend the mountains, they deſcend the valleys:* words which moſt admirably expreſs the ſpeed and impetuoſity of their motion, both in their projection and fall. And that ſomething like this was the real caſe, ſeems not improbable from that exalted paſſage in the 38th chapter of *Job*, where God, queſtioning that righteous man concerning the works of infinite wiſdom and magnificence, manifeſted in the creation, asks him, *Who ſhut up the ſea with doors: when it brake forth, as it had iſſued out of the womb.* --- *When I made the cloud the garment thereof; and thick darkneſs a ſwathing-band for it,* ---- *and brake up for it my decreed place?*

AND as this is the account the ſcriptures give us of the original expanſion, diviſion, and diſtribution of the waters at the creation; nothing is more intelligible, nothing is more obvious to the meaneſt capacity, than how God could deluge the world whenever he pleas'd. Since nothing more was requiſite to effect this, than letting down thoſe waters which he

* Dr. *Patrick.*

firſt lifted up; and cloſing up thoſe vaſt hollows of the earth, (in order to throw up the water uniformly upon its ſurface) into which he firſt tore the earth, in order to receive the water from the ſame ſurface: or, (as *Moſes* expreſſes it) *to let the dry land appear*.

ANY man, that caſts his eye upon a common map of the world, will ſee that more than two thirds of the globe are already cover'd with ſea, to a conſiderable depth. And if we add to theſe, that part of its ſurface, which is over-ſpread with freſh-water, lakes and rivers, we ſhall ſcarce find one quarter part of the earth dry, at this day. And there is reaſon to believe that the depth of the ſea is, in many places prodigious, ----- perhaps exceeding the height of the higheſt mountains. Now the bare cloſing of ſome of theſe vaſt hollows, would throw up ſuch mountains of water, upon the earth, as were ſufficient to deluge a conſiderable part of it: Add to this, that many rivers now run under the earth; and that vaſt ſubterraneous caverns are now found in ſeveral parts of it, filled with water, which, if thrown upon the ſurface, would doubtleſs add immenſly to the floods that already cover it.

AND beſides all this, it is not improbable, that there may be, even yet, a vaſt abyſs of waters ſhut up within this outward ſhell of the earth, ſufficient to deluge it, whenever Almighty God ſhould think fit to break open the ſhell that ſurrounds them, and force them up upon the ſurface: That there was ſuch a ſtore originally depoſited in it, is clearly and indubitably collected from ſeveral paſſages of ſacred writ. Thus in the eighth chapter of the *Proverbs*, wiſdom is introduced ſpeaking of God's creation in the following manner; *When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he ſet a compaſs upon the face of the depth: ---- when he eſtabliſhed the clouds above; when he ſtrengthened the fountains of the deep*, i. e. (in the moſt natural

natural ſenſe of the words) when he fenced in the fountains of the deep, with a ſolid arch of earth.

So likewiſe in the 24th *Pſalm* at the 2d verſe, *David* ſays of the earth, that God *founded it upon the ſeas; and eſtabliſhed it upon the floods.* And again, at the 136th *Pſalm*, when he exhorts to give thanks to the Lord, he adds at the ſixth verſe, *To him that ſtretched out the earth above the waters.*

Now *Moſes* aſcribes the deluge to two cauſes: he tells us, *that the fountains of the great deep were broken up*; and that *the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.* What ſtores of water God might have originally reſerved in the earth for this very purpoſe, is impoſſible to ſay. That he did make ſuch a reſerve, is ſufficiently evident from theſe words of *Moſes.* And tho' the ſame quantity ſhould not now remain, we ſhould remember that St. *Peter* aſſures us, that the ſtate of the earth, at preſent, is very different from what it was at firſt. His words are theſe: *By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water, and in the water.* Now the *Greek* expreſſion, which is here render'd, *ſtanding out of the water*, may alſo be render'd, *made up of water*, i. e. having a vaſt quantity of water in its bowels; and either interpretation brings us to the ſame concluſion: For if the earth was founded upon the waters, (as the *Pſalmiſt* aſſures us it was) then the apoſtle's expreſſion is true in either ſenſe; for then it might properly be ſaid to *ſtand out of the water, and in the water*; and as properly to *conſiſt, in a great meaſure, of water.*

And an earth ſo conſtituted, being, at the ſame time, encompaſſed by a vaſt flood of waters, ſupported by the atmoſphere, was eaſily flooded, at the pleaſure of God.

BUT here it may be ask'd, How this atmoſphere, which ſurrounds the earth, could ſupport ſo vaſt a quantity of vapours, as were ſufficient for forty days inceſſant rain over the face of the whole earth?

I ANSWER, That tho' the preſent atmoſphere extends but a ſmall way, nothing is more intelligible, upon the known principles of philoſophy, than that God could, even according to the preſent eſtabliſhment of nature, (tho' we are by no means to be determined in our reaſonings upon this head, by the preſent ſtate of things in relation to this earth, which St. *Peter* aſſures us is very different from its original condition), diſpoſe an immenſe quantity of vapours, in that vaſt expanſe which ſurrounds the earth, by rarefying them to what degree, and conſequently, expanding them to what extent he thought proper; eſpecially if the moon and ſtars conſpire to theſe operations, as well as the ſun, as learned men think they do *. ---- Nay, the learned theoriſt, who aſcribes this immenſe rain to the atmoſphere of a comet, (which, I own, is by much the moſt probable of all extraordinary natural means) by admitting, that it actually did rain forty days and forty nights, muſt admit that the expanſe, ſurrounding the earth, could ſupport a quantity of vapours ſufficient for that rain: otherwiſe thoſe vapours muſt have fallen down at once, and not by a gradual deſcent for forty days and nights.

BUT ſuppoſing the atmoſphere could not, in its ordinary ſtate, ſupport a quantity of vapours ſufficient for forty days inceſſant rain, upon the wicked world at that time; ſurely it was eaſy for God to add what quantity he thought fit, from the other elements; which we know are tranſmutable into one another. Every naturaliſt knows, that water rarefied is air; and 'tis as evident, that air, condens'd to a

* Vid. Varenii geograph. cap. 19. prop. 3. & 4. p. 222, 223.

certain

certain degree, may be water: that water, at preſent, either conſtitutes a great part of the air we breathe, or, at leaſt, is to a great degree mixt with it, is known beyond all doubt. And why the whole body of it, except what was neceſſary for the few ſurviving animals, might not be either condens'd, or tranſmuted into that element on this occaſion, is not eaſy to ſay: nor to how immenſe a quantity the whole expanſe of air and æther ſo tranſmuted would amount. And 'tis evident, that the very earth, waſh'd off by the rains on this occaſion, (and there is reaſon to believe, that the upper ſtrata were waſh'd off to a conſiderable depth) might add immenſly to the fluid maſs, even ſuppoſing it not tranſmuted into water; and I ſee no reaſon why it was not tranſmuted, unleſs it were, that ſuch a tranſmutation was not neceſſary to the purpoſes of providence at that time: for otherwiſe, ſince the whole conduct of God was very extraordinary in the relation to this affair; why might it not have been ſo in this reſpect, as well as in every other? His ſuſpending all that water (or, at leaſt, the greateſt part of it) which he originally divided from the earth by the firmament, for 1656 years together, was doubtleſs what we call miraculous. And his letting it all down at any time afterwards, for forty days and nights together, after it was ſo taken up, was evidently no leſs miraculous.

'Tis vain therefore to trouble ourſelves in ſearching what means Almighty God made uſe of to produce this effect; whether by the acceſs and atmoſphere of a comet; or by a tranſmutation of ſome other elements into water on that occaſion; or barely letting down thoſe waters he firſt lifted up from the earth, and forcing up thoſe fountains he firſt depoſited in it; ---- which ſeems to be the plain truth of the caſe, whatever change may ſince have been wrought, either in the earth or firmament.

IT muſt indeed be for ever own'd, with the utmoſt gratitude, by all candid enquirers after truth, that to enquire what means God made uſe of on this occaſion, in order to vindicate ſo noble a part of the *Moſaic* hiſtory, and the diſpenſations of providence in the government of the world, and to ſilence the objections of importunate cavillers on this head, is the work of a moſt commendable and noble curioſity: otherwiſe, what avails it to any human creature of common humility, to know what means God made uſe of on this occaſion, when ſo many means were equally in his choice? and when all means were equally ſufficient for it, in the hands of omnipotence?

AND therefore I haſten to that which is more our concern to know, and to demonſtrate to the confuſion of infidelity; and that is, what ends of divine wiſdom were anſwer'd by this ſignal deſtruction of the old world.

DISSERTATION XI.

Concerning the ends of divine wiſdom anſwered by the deluge.

HAVING, in the precedent diſſertation, ſhewn you, what methods of mercy and wiſdom it pleas'd God to make uſe of, to keep mankind in a courſe of duty, and to deter them from diſobedience, before the flood; and that, upon the failure of all thoſe methods, there was an apparent neceſſity of a new revelation at that time, antecedent to the deſtruction of that degenerate race, in order to vindicate the juſtice, and the goodneſs of God in the government of the world; --- to let all ſucceeding generations ſee, that no means were left uneſſay'd for their amendment; and that nothing, but the laſt neceſſity, compell'd

pell'd their Maker to proceed to extremities with his creatures: Having likewiſe ſhewn you how it was poſſible, and by what means it was probable, that mankind became ſo exceedingly corrupt before the flood; and alſo by what means that calamity might be brought upon the earth: I now proceed to enquire, what ends of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs were anſwered by it.

AND one end of divine wiſdom plainly anſwered by it, is this, the eſtabliſhment of one univerſal, inconteſtable, perpetual monument of his power and providence in the puniſhment of guilt, over the face of the whole earth.

ALL the other methods of providence, however, in themſelves, wiſe and wonderful, are yet, thro' the perverſeneſs and vanity of human nature, ſome way or other objects of doubt, and diſpute, at leaſt, if not of direct denial, and downright ridicule, with that ſpirit of infidelity which is gone out into the world; but the deluge is out of the reach of all poſſible exception; and forces that evil ſpirit to be as *dumb*, on this occaſion, as it is *deaf* and *loud* upon others.

IF we vindicate the goodneſs of God, in laying no more than one eaſy reſtraint upon our firſt parents in paradiſe, we are immediately ask'd, Why God did not rather lay *moral* reſtraints upon them? when we ſhew that there was no need of *moral* reſtraints in that ſtate of things; we then are ask'd, Why any reſtraints? *i. e.* Why God did not make his creatures independent of himſelf? or, Why he did not make them all as perfect as himſelf?

IF we tell them of God's teaching us our duty by the plaineſt precepts and prohibitions, they inſiſt, that words are eaſily miſtaken, but the true way of teaching is from the nature of things. If we urge,

that

that teaching by *types* and *ſymbols*, is teaching from the nature of things, they immediately cry out for plain precepts that can't be miſtaken.

If we vindicate the reaſonableneſs of *poſitive* inſtitutions, from a Being of infinite wiſdom, to beings of a very limited capacity, they immediately call out for *rational* precepts. If religion is recommended for its rational precepts, they ſay, rational precepts ſufficiently recommend themſelves. We no ſooner ſhew the excellence of the religion of *Chriſt*, but they cry up the religion of *nature*. If we tell them, that the religion of *Chriſt*, has perfected the religion of nature; they anſwer, That reaſon and nature were ſufficient without that religion. If we urge, that reaſon is not ſufficient, and that the goodneſs of God exacted ſome revelation for the reſtraint and guidance of his creatures, they tell us, that the goodneſs of God made it neceſſary that his creatures ſhould be ſo perfect as to be their own guides. If we anſwer, That *God made man perfect in the beginning*, but that he himſelf forfeited that felicity; they laugh, with the ſcoffers mentioned by the apoſtle, and tell us, that *all things are now as they were from the beginning*.

Here then we join iſſue with them; and tell them, that there was a time, when God ſignally interpos'd in the puniſhment of a corrupt world, by an univerſal deluge of waters; and that only one man and his family were providentially reſcued from that puniſhment; and that the oldeſt hiſtories and antiquities of all nations under heaven, agree in the truth of this fact.

They anſwer, That all antiquity is fabulous; that there might, indeed, have been particular deluges, by ſome accident, in particular places; and that the people of thoſe places might imagine that all the reſt of the world was drown'd except ſome few,

that

that eſcaped among themſelves; and ſo the tradition might become univerſal: but that a deluge was ſo, is utterly incredible and impoſſible.

HERE then we call in natural philoſophy, and aſtronomy to our aid. The firſt of theſe teaches us, that tho' this atmoſphere extends but a ſmall way, yet, 'tis impoſſible to ſay, what quantity of vapours may be ſuſpended in this vaſt expanſe which ſurrounds the earth, poſſibly a quantity ſufficient for more than forty days inceſſant rain over the face of the whole earth; at leaſt, it might have been ſo, in the original conſtitution of things, in relation to this nether world, tho' poſſibly the ſtate of things may now be very different, from their original conſtitution. That there are alſo many ſubterraneous rivers and receptacles of water in the earth, which, with the floods forced up by cloſing ſome great hollows in the depths of the ocean, would throw an inconceivable quantity of water upon that part of the earth, which is now dry. And that there are unanſwerable reaſons to believe, that, beſides all theſe ſupplies, there is a vaſt fund of waters ſhut up in the very bowels of the earth, to be thrown up upon the ſurface of it, at the pleaſure of its maker; at leaſt, St. *Peter* aſſures us, this was the original ſtate of the earth; and if it pleaſed God to break the outward ſhell of the earth, and force out the fluid contained in it, by the interpoſition of natural cauſes, rather than by ſome immediate act of power, aſtronomy demonſtrates the poſſibility of doing ſo, by the acceſs of a comet; which, by the force of attraction, might alter the figure of the earth, from ſpherical to oval; and by that means, force out the fluid within it, at a great variety of fiſſures, which would neceſſarily be form'd on this occaſion. That, if all this were not enough to drown this ball, an inconſiderable portion of the atmoſphere of the ſame comet, would be demonſtrably ſufficient to anſwer the *Moſaic* account of the deluge.

HERE

HERE then are hiſtory, antiquity, natural philoſophy, and aſtronomy full on the ſide of revelation. What ſubterfuge now for infidelity? Why ſtill it may be urged, that ſuppoſing the difficulties, as to the poſſibility of theſe effects, to be over, yet poſſibility and probability join'd together, don't infer reality and certainty.

HERE then we appeal once more to nature; and find that, in fact, there are, at this day, as evident, as demonſtrative, as inconteſtable proofs of the deluge, over the face of the whole earth, at the diſtance of about four thouſand years, as if it had happen'd but laſt year. And whereas *Moſes* aſſures us, that the *waters prevailed fifteen cubits above the tops of the higheſt mountains*, let the mountains themſelves be appeal'd to for the truth of this aſſertion: Examine the higheſt eminences of the earth, and they all, with one accord, produce the ſpoils of the ocean depoſited upon them on that occaſion; the ſhells and skeletons of ſea-fiſh, and ſea-monſters of all kinds. The *Alps*, the *Appennine*, the *Pyrenees*, the *Andes* and *Atlas*, and *Ararat*, every mountain of every region under heaven, from *Japan* to *Mexico*, all conſpire in one uniform, univerſal proof, that they all had the ſea ſpread over their higheſt ſummits. Search the earth; you ſhall find the mouſe-deer, natives of *America*, buried in *Ireland*; elephants, natives of *Aſia* and *Africa*, buried in the midſt of *England*; crocodiles, natives of the *Nile*, in the heart of *Germany*; ſhell-fiſh, never known in any but the *American* ſeas, together with entire skeletons of whales, in the moſt inland regions of *England*; trees of vaſt dimenſions, with their roots and tops, and ſome alſo with leaves and fruit, at the bottoms of mines and marls; and that too, in regions where no tree of that kind was ever known to grow; nay, where it is demonſtrably impoſſible they could grow. Nay more, trees and

plants

plants of various kinds, which are not known to grow in any region under heaven *.

If you ask how all this could be? How ſhells could float in the water, ſo as to reach, and to reſt on the tops of mountains; or how, both they and other creatures ſhould ſink ſo deep into the earth, as to be found at the bottom of mines and quarries? I anſwer, that all theſe events perfectly demonſtrate *Moſes*'s account of this matter to be inconteſtably true; ſince all theſe events could plainly come to paſs, according to his account of the matter, but are utterly impoſſible, and unimaginable, upon any other principles. We now ſee ſhells of all kinds, conſtantly thrown upon the ſhoar, by the working of the ſea; and therefore, when all parts of the earth became ſhoars by the gradual ſwelling of the waters, 'tis obvious, that they muſt have ſea-ſhells ſucceſſively thrown upon them: and foraſmuch as, in all probability, no fiſh were deſtroy'd for food before the flood, 'tis evident, that ſhell-fiſh, as all others, muſt have been in prodigious quantities in the ſea at that time; as their being found to have been in prodigious quantities at that time, is alſo a very good proof that they were not deſtroy'd for food before that time.

Besides this, *Moſes* tells us that *the fountains of the great deep were broken up* on that occaſion. Now the ruſhing up of the waters thro' theſe fountains, muſt, of neceſſity, cauſe ſo prodigious a commotion in the ſea, as would throw up the heavieſt bodies from the bottom of the ocean; and this working of that huge flood, added to the inceſſant agitation of the rains and tides for ſo many days together, were ſufficient to throw bodies of almoſt any weight, and much more ſuch light bodies as ſhells, upon the

* See *Woodward*'s natural hiſtory of the earth enlarged, and the defence of it. *Bochart*, &c.

tops of the higheſt mountains. And if thoſe appearances they call *ſpouts*, are now found ſufficient to force up waters above the clouds, and, by means of that force, *to throw up* ſtones, and tear up anchors by ſome aſtoniſhing power, with how much more force muſt that water act and agitate, which is thrown up by the preſſure of the earth? And as the breaking up of theſe fountains of the deep, is abundantly ſufficient to account for any effect of the deluge, now obſervable upon the greateſt heights of the earth, ſo the return of the waters into the bowels of the earth, thro' the ſame channels, when God ſhut up the fountains of the deep, muſt of neceſſity, carry bodies of all kinds back with them again, into the bowels of the earth.

ADD to this, that all that maſs of earth, and ſtones, and ſhells, and trees, and animals, which floated together in that immenſe body of waters, for ſo many days, muſt of neceſſity, in their ſubſiding, fill up a vaſt many hollows left in the earth, from the beginning; and a vaſt many more made in it, by the fall, the motion and eruption of the waters, in infinite places. And that earth-quakes alſo, muſt, in many places, have ſunk theſe bodies at ſundry times, much deeper into the bowels of the earth; and by that means, preſerved them much ſafer, than they otherwiſe would have been.

AND thus it comes to paſs, that the heights and depths of the earth, equally and inconteſtably confeſs the mighty power and ſignal interpoſition of God, in the deſtruction of the old world, by a deluge of waters, *for the wickedneſs of them that dwelt therein. Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and cedars, beaſts and all cattel*, nay, *fire and vapours, wind and ſtorm*, (conſpiring to prove the) *fulfilling his word*. And thus it comes to paſs, that we may with ſome ſmall variation ſay, of Almighty God, from theſe univerſal effects, this ubiquity of his power, in the deluge, as

David

David does, on another occaſion, of the ubiquity of his preſence, *If I climb up towards heaven, thou art there; if I go down towards hell, thou art there alſo.*

And here I muſt again put a plain queſtion to the patrons of infidelity. Do they know, that this univerſal atteſtation of the whole earth to the truth of the *Moſaic* hiſtory, is an amazing and inconteſtable proof, that that hiſtory is verified even in that part of it, which, of all others, is the moſt ſurprizing? If they do know this, Why do they not believe it? Do they know it to be demonſtrably true, and will they yet revile it, as if it were demonſtrably falſe? Is it poſſible there can be ſuch monſters among the ſons of men? And on the other hand, if they do not know it, will they dare to inſult our faith, from the force of downright ſtupidity and ignorance? Is this to be endur'd? We produce plain proof, demonſtrative, inconteſtable evidence, and they confute us with a loud irrefragable laugh, or a gentle, commiſerating ſmile: We urge reaſon, and they retort ridicule, and ſo go off in triumph.

MOSES had paſs'd his life in *Egypt*, and its confines, and it was impoſſible for him, by any natural means, to know the ſtate of things in all the other regions of the earth. Theſe iſlands were not then, in all probability, known to the reſt of the world; nor were *China* and *America* ſo much as dreamt of. How then could *Moſes* take upon him to ſay in ſo peremptory a manner, that the waters of the deluge *prevailed over all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven; and that the mountains were covered;* unleſs he either knew this from the unerring ſpirit of God, or was informed of it from ſome ſure unerring tradition? Now ſuppoſe it to be barely from tradition, if that tradition is found to be unerring in that part, which is at once the moſt amazing, and the moſt exceptionable of all others, Can we conſiſtently, with any

degree of common ſenſe, diſcredit or diſclaim it in any other part? eſpecially, when it is found, upon a due enquiry, that there is a plain foundation for a clear, unqueſtionable tradition in this caſe, from the few generations which had paſs'd between *Noah* and *Moſes*: and when all the parts of that tradition, are found, after the moſt exact enquiry, to be perfectly conformable to the reaſon and nature of things, as well as to the whole train of antiquity?

BUT could not the higheſt mountains of the earth have been gradually covered by particular deluges, ſucceeding one another at ſeveral periods?

I ANSWER, That nothing in nature is more irrational or unphiloſophical, than ſuch a ſuppoſition; as will immediately appear to any one, who conſiders the nature of water, which nothing but a miracle could raiſe to ſuch a height, and ſuch a ſtate of ſuſpenſion: and keep it in that ſtate, ſo as to cover the higheſt mountains of the earth, and at the ſame time leave its lower regions dry. — But, however, if any man think it more rational to ſuppoſe a million of miracles in this caſe, than to admit the plain *Moſaic* account of this matter, he is at liberty, for me, to enjoy ſuch ſuppoſitions, in full complacence.

OTHERS are fond of ſuppoſing, that the preſent phenomena aſcribed to the deluge, are the effects of ſome diſturb'd or chaotick ſtate of things, antecedent to the *Moſaic* creation; — that is, in truth, ſuch is the extravagance of human vanity and perverſeneſs! we are fond of building upon every wild imagination that comes into our heads, however irrational and unſupported, rather than reſt upon the credit of the moſt rational, the moſt credible, the moſt authentic accounts of things, when once they appear to us, under the inſuperable diſadvantage, of being inſpired by God!

ANOTHER

ANOTHER end of the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs, anſwer'd by the deluge, was, the taking off that curſe from the earth, which God had pronounced upon it, immediately after the fall. Now, that he did take off the curſe from the earth, at this time, is evident both from ſcripture and reaſon.

WE read in *Geneſis* v. 28, 29, that when *Lamech* had *lived an hundred eighty and two years, he begat a ſon, and called his name Noah*, (which ſignifies *reſt*) *ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands; becauſe of the ground which the Lord hath curſed.* This text is commonly explain'd by the ſubſequent account of *Noah*'s being *an husbandman*, and finding out the uſe of wine; as if no more was meant by thoſe words of *Lamech*'s, than that *Noah*, by that invention, ſhould bring great conſolation to mankind, under the labours of life. Now this is evidently a wrong interpretation; for no man believes that *Noah* was the firſt husbandman; (that trade was as old as *Adam*) nor is there the leaſt reaſon to believe from the text, that he firſt found out the art of making wine. 'Tis ſaid, indeed, that he planted a vineyard; but certainly it does not follow from hence, that he was the firſt that did ſo; nay, the contrary ſeems much more probable from the text: for it is ſaid, that *Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard.* It ſeems evidently implied in theſe words, that *Noah* never had been a husbandman till this time. 'Tis probable the righteous race of *Seth*, were ſhepherds like *Abel*, and that *Noah* was an entire ſtranger to agriculture, till neceſſity made him turn his thoughts that way, after the flood; nor is it in the leaſt likely, he ſhould invent the way of making wine, at the very beginning of his applying to that profeſſion. Suppoſe him the firſt planter of vines: Is it any way credible, that the very firſt planter of vines, invented wine? no ſurely. Does any man believe, that the firſt planter of orchards, invented cy-

der; or, that the firſt planter of any tree found out the way of fermenting liquors from the fruit of that tree? nothing is leſs credible than ſuch a ſuppoſition.

Besides, I think it credible from a paſſage in the new teſtament, that wine was invented before the flood. In the ſeventeenth chapter of St. *Luke* and the twenty-ſixth verſe, our Saviour tells his diſciples, that *as it was in the days of Noe, ſo ſhould it alſo be in the days of the Son of man: they did eat, they drank, &c. till the day that Noe entered the ark, and the flood came and deſtroyed them all. Alſo as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank*, &c. Now we know, that by eating and drinking in the days of the *Son of man*, is meant, feaſting and drinking wine; and the ſame is alſo meant by eating and drinking in the days of *Lot:* and therefore, by parity of reaſon, the ſame ſhould alſo be underſtood of the days of *Noe*; eſpecially ſince this is the known ſenſe in which our Saviour uſes theſe words, as may be ſeen from *Matt.* xi. 18, 19. *For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, He hath a devil; the Son of man came eating and drinking, and they ſay, Behold, a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber.* And can we after this ſuſpect, that by eating and drinking in the days of *Noe*, is meant, any thing leſs than feaſting and drinking wine?

But ſuppoſe *Noah* was the inventer of wine: How does the invention of wine take off the curſe from the earth? And how ſmall a number of thoſe that toil in tilling it, are any way advantag'd by that invention? And therefore the only rational interpretation of *Lamech*'s ſpeech upon the birth of *Noah*, is this; that he, being a prophet, foreſaw that God would in his ſon's time, and out of a particular regard to his righteouſneſs, take off the curſe from the earth; and beſtow all thoſe bleſſings, upon him, and his race, which had never been beſtowed upon any man, ſince

the

the fall. And we find, that, in fact, God Almighty did bleſs *Noah*, and his ſons, after the flood, in the very ſame manner, in which he bleſſed *Adam* and *Eve* after the creation; and not only gave them dominion over the creatures, but likewiſe enlarged their charter; and gave them a right to the uſe of the creatures for food; with this aditional aſſurance, that he would no more curſe the earth for the ſins of mankind *.

And as this is the moſt rational account of this matter, from the teſtimony of ſcripture, 'tis evident, from the nature of the flood, that the curſe muſt be taken off the earth, at that time. This appears from conſidering the flood, upon the foot of any rational hypotheſis, that can be form'd concerning it. If the curſe was executed by withholding rain from the earth, during the whole period before the flood, or a conſiderable part of it, (as poſſibly it might) 'tis evident, that the ſaturation of it with rain and ſalts, on that occaſion, together with the conſtant ſupply of moiſture from the clouds ever ſince, muſt effectually take off that curſe, from that day to this. Add to this, that the infinite ſhoals of fiſh, and all the carcaſes of animals, which would naturally be left on the heights of the earth on this occaſion, muſt have left a vaſt fund of fatneſs, to be gradually waſhed down thence upon the lower lands, by every ſhower from heaven. It muſt, indeed, be own'd, that land animals cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed to have been ſo very numerous in that accurſed ſtate of the earth, as now; but fiſh, doubtleſs, were more numerous: None of them, in all human probability, being deſtroy'd for human food before that time; — and as many kinds of fiſh ſwim in vaſt ſhoals, and all that we know of them, feed in ſhallow waters; 'tis evident, that as the waters ſunk faſt, the ſurface of the earth being at the

* See this matter very ingeniouſly and clearly diſcuſs'd in Dr. *Sherlock*'s diſcourſes of propheſy.

ſame time unequal, many of them alſo delighting in mud and ſlutch, vaſt numbers of them muſt be deſerted upon the tops of the higheſt mountains; and ſo proportionably, upon all leſſer eminences of the earth. Carcaſes alſo of all kinds of land animals, floating in the waters, would naturally ſink, where thoſe waters were ſhalloweſt, that is, where the earth was higheſt: and as men alſo are very reaſonably ſuppoſed to have been then immenſly numerous, from their longevity, 'tis evident, they alſo muſt have greatly added to the treaſure of rich mould, left upon the mountains on this occaſion; and in that condition to which the earth muſt neceſſarily be reduced at that time, 'tis evident all theſe carcaſes would naturally ſink into it, and ſo be covered over with mould, and mud, upon the drying of it again: which was neceſſary to prevent a peſtilence from the corruption of thoſe carcaſes in open air.

BUT it is ſuppoſed by ſome, that mankind were but a ſmall number at the time of the *Moſaic* deluge, and therefore an univerſal flood was not neceſſary.

I ANSWER, That this ſuppoſition is evidently erroneous, and for the reader's full ſatisfaction on this head, I refer him to Mr. *Whiſton*'s learned and rational account of this matter in his *theory of the earth.*

THAT there have been particular deluges, is proved beyond all doubt, by many learned writers, antient and modern*: but then the authentick inſtances of this kind, which they give us, are only of level or low lands flooded from the accidental breaking of thoſe banks or diques which kept out the ſea.

* See, in the preſent ſtate of the republick of letters for *October*, 1731. printed for *William Innys, London,* — *A letter relating to ſome diffi ulties ariſing from reading Mr.* Woodward's *account of the manner and effects of the deluge.*

but

But to imagine that high and mountainous regions, *Attica*, for example, and *Theſſaly*, could be cover'd with water, and yet, that lower regions ſhould continue dry at the ſame time, is a ſuppoſition attended with much more difficulty than an univerſal deluge.

THIS objection being removed, I think it evident, that the curſe muſt have been taken off the earth by the deluge, according to that account of the matter, which is moſt natural and obvious to the apprehenſions of mankind.

OR ſuppoſe all the upper ſtrata of the earth, to have been entirely torn off, by the rains and eruptions of water from the *fountains of the deep*, on this occaſion: (as, I think, 'tis highly probable they were) 'tis evident, that, after theſe rains and eruptions were over, they would ſubſide again for the moſt part, according to their ſpecifick gravities: and conſequently the bodies of all animals would ſubſide laſt, and ſo ſink into the mud as before. Except ſuch as in this tumult ſhould chance to be loaded, or otherwiſe entangled with heavier matter; and they, would neceſſarily be carry'd down, and mix'd with the ſtrata of ſuch heavier matter, as they are found to be at this day. The fiſh alſo would ſwim, and feed, and be deſerted, as before.

AND in this caſe, 'tis evident, that the earth would be, to all intents of fruitfulneſs, in full as good a condition, as that in which it was left, when God firſt removed the waters from it, at the creation, *and made the dry land appear*. Except what alterations might have been caus'd in it, by any new motion; or by its being placed in ſome different relation to the ſun or planets at this time: which doubtleſs might occaſion much difference in the temperament of the air; and in conſequence of that, in the vegetation of plants, and lives of animals.

If it be ask'd, How rain could waſh off all the upper layers of the earth? I anſwer, That cataracts of rain could do this in a few hours; nay, in a few minutes. And ſince the LXX interpret the *windows of heaven*, open'd on this occaſion, by the *cataracts* of heaven, there is reaſon to believe, that the rain which introduc'd the deluge, began, at leaſt, in cataracts.

There is an account in the philoſophical * tranſactions, of a fall of water from the heavens, which, in a few minutes, tore up the earth ſeven foot deep, to the very rock, which lay under it. If that rain had laſted a few days, nay, even a few hours, will any man ſay it might not have waſh'd away much of the rock, if not all? And there is all the reaſon in the world to believe, that an infinite number of rocks were waſh'd away at the deluge. How, otherwiſe, is it poſſible, that ſea ſhells and ſea animals of ſeveral kinds, ſhould be found in the midſt of rocks of marble at this day, as they frequently are? 'Tis notorious to a proverb, that a conſtant drop will wear away a ſtone: And what rock can we imagine ſo hard, as not to yield to the violence of a continued cataract? The only difficulty is, how the particles of ſtone, ſo waſh'd off, ſhould become rocks again: but this difficulty is alſo remov'd, by conſidering, that upon the ceaſing of the turbulent motion of the waters, their ſpecifick gravity muſt make them ſubſide together in great quantities; and in that ſubſidence they might eaſily carry other bodies down with them, eſpecially ſhells, which are nearly of their own ſpecifick gravity: and ſince marble, now pounded into very ſmall parts, is found eaſily to coaleſce into maſſes of marble again; (and might more eaſily do ſo in the earth from immenſe preſſure); nothing is more conceivable, than how very ſmall particles of marble might

* *Motte*'s abridgment, vol. 2. p. 215.

alſo

alſo coaleſce in like manner at the deluge. And ſince God expreſsly declared on this occaſion, (as you may read in the ſixth chapter of *Geneſis*) that he would *deſtroy all fleſh*, and *the earth alſo*, (for ſo both the *Hebrew* and the *Greek* of this paſſage is plainly to be underſtood), I think it demonſtrable from the effects of the deluge, now obſerved in the earth, that, in fact, what is properly call'd *earth*, that is, the upper ſtrata of the globe were actually and literally deſtroy'd at that time; and being deſtroy'd and eſtabliſh'd again, as at the creation, the curſe, muſt, in the eſtabliſhment of it, be taken off*.

AND thus having ſhewn you two great and excellent ends anſwered by the deluge, the eſtabliſhment of one perpetual, inconteſtable memorial of the divine interpoſition for the puniſhment of ſin, ---- and the taking off that curſe from the earth, which was laid on after the fall: I now proceed, in a few words, to anſwer two objections of weight which lie againſt this doctrine; and ſo conclude.

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* But if any man think it more credible, that theſe rocks might be form'd by ſecretions of the finer parts of ſtone from the earth, in the diſſolution of its upper ſtrata, on this occaſion; (or by the petrification of certain kinds of clay) and can reconcile this opinion to the plain declarations of ſcripture; I ſhall not contend with him upon the matter: ſince it is evident, that rocks might be formed by the ſubſiding and coaleſcence of ſimilar particles of ſtone ſo ſever'd from the earth, at this time; in the very ſame manner that they were form'd at the firſt reduction of the *Chaos*, into form, by thoſe laws which it hath pleaſed God to impreſs upon matter. Nor do I believe, that any man will pretend to ſay, Why ſtones might not be then form'd in the earth by theſe laws? ſince we now ſee them daily form'd in the bodies of living creatures, by laws leſs obvious to our underſtandings.

Nay poſſibly many of thoſe ſtrata, which are now ſtone, were originally clay, now petrified. (See more on this ſubject in *Motte*'s abridgment of the philoſoph. tranſact. vol. 2. p. 254. See alſo the letter in relation to Dr. *Woodward*'s hiſtory before referred to.)

DIS-

DISSERTATION XII.

Objections to the Moſaic *account of the deluge, and this explication of it, conſidered.*

THE firſt is this: *That man ſtill eats bread in the ſweat of his brow; and that the earth is ſtill curſed with thorns and thiſtles.*

I ANSWER, That the labour of one man, is now ſufficient for the ſupport of a great many; and conſequently, a great majority of mankind, are exempted from the neceſſity of labouring in the earth; and by that means, are at liberty to be imploy'd in thoſe purſuits of knowledge, and thoſe conveniences and ornaments of life, which can alone make it deſirable to reaſonable creatures. And ſuch a growth of thorns and thiſtles, as defeats not this end, ſhould rather be conſider'd, as a neceſſary, and a happy incitement to induſtry; for tho' God took the curſe from the earth, yet human nature not being yet recovered to its original rectitude, which could only make a life exempted from labour, deſirable: it could not be his intention, that men ſhould paſs away their lives in idleneſs and ſloth: and I think it juſtly doubtful, whether thorns and thiſtles, which were demonſtrably a curſe to *Adam*, are not now rather bleſſings to his poſterity; agreeably to God's great prerogative of power and wiſdom, to produce good out of evil †.

† It is not, I believe, imagin'd, that thorns and weeds had no exiſtence before the curſe: how vexatious they might have been from that time till the flood, is impoſſible to ſay; that now, ſince the diſtinction of property, thorns are a vaſt bleſſing to the earth, is undeniable. — That thiſtles are here put for weeds in general, I take for granted; and, I believe, every candid man will find upon enquiry, that weeds now anſwer ſo many excellent ends and uſes in life, as render them rather a bleſſing than a curſe.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, the grant of the creatures for food, given immediately after the deluge, hath exceedingly lightened the labours of life, by leſſening the neceſſity of tillage; and by that means, the curſe of toil, impos'd upon *Adam*, is, in a great meaſure remov'd. And this very grant ſeems plainly to imply, that the curſe was now taken off the earth. For certainly, if the earth had not now been fitted to produce plenty of grain, as well as herbage, it could never ſuſtain ſuch a vaſt number of animals, as are now daily deſtroyed for food: many of which, are ſupported almoſt entirely by grain, (as moſt kinds of fowl) and others require great ſupplies of grain, as well as herbage; all which the earth is now found ſufficient to ſupply, with the toil of a comparatively ſmall number of men. And beſides this, great quantities of grain, are now employed in ſupplying mankind with thoſe liquors, which chear them under their toils; and by that means, exceedingly lighten the labours of life. And, I believe, no one imagines that this was an advantage enjoy'd by the antediluvian world. Add to all this, that where the earth is almoſt wholly exhauſted by inceſſant tillage, 'tis common to ſee it ſurprizingly recruited, and enrich'd again at once, by the treaſures depoſited in it at the deluge; as is the known caſe of marls, many of which are found to be nothing but huge heaps of ſea-ſhells, thro' length of time diſſolv'd in the earth. And, in all probability, all the kinds of marls are no more than the ſame ſubſtance, ſomewhat diverſified by the different ſoils in which they are depoſited.

SUCH care hath the Divine wiſdom and goodneſs taken, not only to perpetuate the proof of that great judgment, which ſin brought upon the earth: but alſo to demonſtrate, that at the ſame time that God puniſh'd ſin, he remember'd mercy; and in that very act of chaſtiſement upon the wicked, laid up a bleſſing

ſing for the righteous; laid up wherewithal to reward honeſt induſtry, to the end of the world.

AGAIN 'tis objected, that when God eſtabliſhed his covenant with *Noah*, never more to deſtroy the earth or the creatures by a flood, he appointed the rain-bow to be a ſignal of that covenant: now the rain-bow is only the effect of certain reflections and refractions of the rays of the ſun from a watry cloud: and how can that be a ſignal that there ſhall be no deluge?

I ANSWER, That the rain-bow is the propereſt ſignal of ſuch a covenant that can be imagined. For the reflection of the ſun from a watery cloud, is a certain ſign, that tho' it rains in one part of the heavens, ſome other part is clear and unclouded. And, 'tis evident, there can be no univerſal deluge, without an univerſal rain; ſuch as would over-caſt the whole heaven, and hide the ſun; and probably take away all diſtinction of day and night. And as it is agreeable to reaſon to believe this, the accounts of the heathen, concerning the firſt deluge, which they call the flood of *Ogyges*, are agreeable to this belief. Thus *Solinus* tells us, that one continued night hid the day on that occaſion, for many months together. Nor is the ſame thing obſcurely implied in thoſe words at the eighth chapter of *Geneſis*, where God declares, immediately after the deluge, that he would never more ſmite the earth in the ſame manner: and to confirm that declaration, he adds, *While earth remaineth, ſeed-time, and harveſt, and cold, and heat, and ſummer, and winter, and day and night, ſhall not ceaſe.* Now, 'tis certain, that ſeed-time and harveſt, and ſummer and winter, (which are now to ceaſe no more) had entirely ceas'd, without any diſtinction at this time: therefore we may fairly infer, that ſo had day and night too. Now this being granted, what could be in itſelf a more noble or enlivening emblem of

of hope, or a more rational and ſignificant aſſurance againſt a ſecond deſtruction by rain, than that glorious *bow of God* in the clouds! which demonſtrates, that all the rain, which at any time threatens the earth, can only affect ſome particular portion of it; and is at the ſame time ſo peculiarly fitted to convey this hope, and this demonſtration, to every region under heaven, and in every day throughout the whole year! which no other natural indication, in the univerſe, is fitted to do *.

And if that heavenly bow was never before ſeen, till the moment that God made this declaration to *Noah*, (as it ſhould ſeem from the very expreſſion here uſed, that it was not); *I do ſet my bow in the cloud, and it ſhall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth; and it ſhall come to paſs, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow ſhall be ſeen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all fleſh; and the water ſhall no more become a flood to deſtroy all fleſh.* I ſay, on ſuppoſition, that *Noah* had never before ſeen a rain-bow, (a ſuppoſition which the above declaration fairly juſtifies), how muſt that glorious phænomenon at once fill his eyes, with wonder and delight! and his heart, with joyful aſſurance! and that he never had ſeen any ſuch appearance till that moment, is highly probable: ſince, 'tis evident, there might have been rain for many ages without a rain-bow: which ariſes from the concurrence of ſeveral circumſtances, which we are under no neceſſity of believing to have concurr'd, in the ante-diluvian ſtate of things: ----- at leaſt, 'tis certain there could be no rain-bow without rain; and there is no convincing

* Thoſe rains which now exhibit the rain-bow to our eyes, are gentle, refreſhing ſhowers, plainly intended as bleſſings to the earth; ſuch bleſſings, as, I think, cannot be fairly preſumed to have been beſtowed upon it, in its accurſed ſtate. — And therefore, from the rain-bow being now ſeen, it can by no means be fairly inferred, that it was ſeen before the deluge.

reaſon

reaſon to believe there was any rain before the flood: and this opinion is greatly ſtrengthned at leaſt, from theſe words in the eleventh chapter of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, and the ſeventh verſe: *By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the ſaving of his houſe.*

NOW if *Noah* had ſeen great rains and floods, drowning and overwhelming particular portions of the earth, before this time, ſuch as we now daily obſerve, could the apoſtle properly call floods and devaſtations from rain, *things not yet ſeen*? ----- From hence I infer, that *Noah* had ſeen no rain before the flood, at leaſt no ſuch rains as we now daily ſee; and conſequently, no rain-bow.

AND the tradition of antiquity concerning the rain-bow, ſeems ſtrongly to confirm this opinion: for *Iris*, which is the name of the rain-bow with the *Greeks*, is ſaid to be the daughter of * *Thaumas*, (*i. e.* the daughter of wonder), and the meſſenger of *Jupiter*, to carry his great oath to the other Gods, when they had offended. Now this ſeems to be a fable, plainly founded upon the ſolemn covenant now mentioned, which God made with man after the deluge: the covenant of God on this occaſion, plainly implies the oath of God, as you may learn from *Iſaiah* liv. 9. where God, declaring his reſolution of mercy to the *Gentiles*, uſeth theſe words; *For this is as the waters of Noah to me; for as I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhould no more go over the earth, ſo have I ſworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.*

WHEREAS then God, on this occaſion, made a covenant with man by oath, and the rain-bow then firſt ſeen with aſtoniſhment in the heavens, was the

* Vid. Heſiodi Theogon. v. 780. & ſeq.

ſignal

ſignal of that covenant: what could be a more natural mythology founded upon theſe circumſtances, than that *Iris was the daughter of wonder; and the meſſenger of Jupiter, to carry his ſolemn oath.*

AND thus having, I hope, ſufficiently vindicated the ſignificancy of this ſign, and the wiſdom of God in appointing it, I ſhall, in my next diſſertation, with God's aſſiſtance, conſider the teſtimonies of antiquity relating to the deluge.

DISSERTATION XIII.

Of the concurrence of all antiquity with the Moſaic *account of the flood.*

HAVING ended my diſſertations, concerning the natural cauſes, and providential purpoſes of the deluge: I come now, to enquire, how far all the accounts of antiquity, conſpire to the atteſtation of this fact: beginning with the moſt antient. Teſtimonies cited by *Joſephus* and *Euſebius*.

A WORK, tho' of ſome labour, yet of little praiſe to the Author, or merit to the Reader, more than what may ariſe from ſaving him the trouble of revolving and comparing the collections of learned men, on this head; and deducing from them, that evidence, which, upon due conſideration, muſt naturally and neceſſarily reſult from ſuch an enquiry.

AND here I take it for granted, that every candid reader muſt, in this caſe, admit the teſtimony of ſuch writers, as quoted others, extant, and well known, at the time of ſuch quotations, without any contradiction of their cotemporaries, or the leaſt imputation or ſuſpicion of fraud, in the point. Such, for

example, are the quotations of JOSEPHUS and EUSEBIUS, from the writings of BEROSUS, NICHOLAUS DAMASCENUS, ABIDENUS, and others, extant and well known in their times. Which quotations have this fair preſumption of truth: that if they had been any way falſified, they muſt have deſtroyed their author's credit, and defeated the very purpoſes which they were produc'd to eſtabliſh.

IT muſt be allowed, that quotations are ſo far falſe, as they are imperfect, thro' deſign; or miſtaken, thro' ignorance of original languages; and that we are furniſhed with inſtances enough in both kinds, from many late writers, of great diſtinction. But I verily think, that both JOSEPHUS and EUSEBIUS, are clear of both theſe imputations. They quote from *Greek*; and there is ſome preſumption that they underſtood it, becauſe they wrote in it; and quote in it at large, from writers and writings of all ſorts; and are ſo far from being skilled in the modern art, of breaking in, and breaking off, in the middle of a ſentence, that the quotations which I have had occaſion to conſult in them, are introduced and concluded in the utmoſt ſimplicity; and in the moſt natural chain of narration. And therefore they are clear of all ſuſpicion, except on the head of direct deſign'd corruption: and, I think, their deſign, their characters, and the ages in which they lived, abundantly acquit them upon that head. Their characters, and deſigns, will be better ſeen hereafter; and as to the ages in which they wrote, it is well known that they were ſufficiently learned, and prejudiced to their diſadvantage. Ages, which wanted neither able nor active adverſaries, to oppoſe the truths they advanced; and to expoſe the leaſt attempts to advance them, by any degree or colour of fallacy, or fraud; as appears from many of their writings ſtill extant. And as to ſuch of them as carry any oppoſition to revelation, it is well known, that

Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, (in confidence of their own integrity, and the goodneſs of their cauſe), have not been afraid to preſerve them, with as much care, as their own moſt valued writings; inſomuch that there is good reaſon to believe, that the very beſt and bittereſt Books, that ever were publiſh'd againſt divine revelation, are ſtill extant; either intire, or, at leaſt, in the full weight and energy of their objections. No Body that reads this, will, I believe, imagine that I mean thoſe of modern *Free-thinkers*, which ſome people are hardy enough to regard, but as humble imitations, at the beſt, ---- or wearisome repetitions! But tho' they impeach theſe eminent writers, as defective in the little circumſtances of ſtile, decency, skill, *&c.* they are, however, forced to do them this juſtice, --- that they have diſcovered as little variety of malice upon this ſubject, as of wit. No fault of modern infidels ---- the ſubject was exhauſted.

THIS being premiſed, I now proceed to produce the teſtimonies of antiquity to the point before us, in the beſt and cleareſt order I can.

JOSEPHUS, in his firſt book againſt *Apion*, ſays of the *Chaldæans* in general, that all their hiſtories and monuments of learning, had a great conformity with the *Jewiſh*: And of BEROSUS in particular, (who was prieſt of *Belus*, and contemporary with *Alexander the Great*), he tells us, that as he wrote of the aſtronomy and philoſophy of the *Chaldæans*, for the uſe of the *Grecians*, he was well known to all who were any way converſant in things relating to literature, (here is an appeal to the whole learned world, for the truth of what he delivers on this point), and then adds theſe words; ---- *Now this* Beroſus, *following the moſt antient writings, relateth the hiſtory of the flood, and the deſtruction of mankind, in it, in the ſame manner with* Moſes: *Alſo of the ark in which* Noah,

the leader of our race, was ſaved; which was carried to the ſummits of the Armenian *mountains.*

HERE we are to take notice, that JOSEPHUS had before this, wrote to the ſame purpoſe, of BEROSUS's teſtimony concerning the deluge, (as ſhall be ſhewn immediately); and when he was attack'd by *Apion*, as raiſing the dignity of the *Jewiſh* nation above their deſerts; they being a late upſtart people, unknown to the reſt of the world: He again appeals to the ſame BEROSUS, for the truth of what MOSES related; and immediately after ſhews, that BEROSUS was acquainted with the people of the *Jews*.

NOW this vouching BEROSUS's teſtimony a ſecond time, and in a warm diſpute with an adverſary, without the leaſt hint that his firſt appeal to him had ever been conteſted, is ſurely a fair preſumption, that that appeal was not conteſted: and that BEROSUS's account of the deluge, was perfectly agreeable to that of MOSES.

IN the firſt book of his *Jewiſh* antiquities, he tells us,* that the *Armenians* called the place where the ark reſted, ἀποβατήριον, (the deſcent), doubtleſs, becauſe *Noah* deſcended from thence upon dry ground, and adds, *there the inhabitants now ſhew the remains of the ark*, ---- and that there is no improbability in this circumſtance of the relation, ſhall be clearly ſhewn hereafter.

HE alſo adds, ---- "But of this deluge and the "ark, all they who wrote the hiſtories of the *Barba-* "*rians*, make mention, of whom is BEROSUS the "*Chaldæan*; for he, ſpeaking of what concern'd the "deluge, relateth to this purpoſe;" *Now it is ſaid that ſome part of that ſhip is yet extant in* Armenia, *in*

* Antiq. Jud. l. 1. c. 3.

the

the mountain of the Cordyæi; *and that ſome carry about pieces of the* Aſphaltus *which they take from it, and that men make uſe of what is ſo carried about, for the moſt part, as a kind of charm to avert evil.*

JOSEPHUS alſo adds the teſtimonies of many other writers to the ſame purpoſe; as follows; ---
" But of theſe things alſo HIERONIMUS the *Egyptian*,
" makes mention; who alſo wrote the *Phœnician* ar-
" chæology; MNASEAS alſo, and many others. Al-
" ſo NICHOLAUS of *Damaſcus*, gives us an hiſtorical
" relation of theſe things, in this manner.

THERE *is above* Minyas *a great mountain in* Armenia, *called* Baris, *to which it is reported, that many flying at the time of the deluge, were there ſaved; and that a certain perſon, carried in an* ark, *arrived on the ſummit of the mountain: and that the reliques of the wood were preſerved a long time. And poſſibly this may be the ſame man, of whom* MOSES, *the lawgiver of the* Jews, *wrote.*

IT is generally deemed diſadvantageous to an author, to be defended before he is attacked: but as infidels have found a new way of blaſting the credit of writers, not by critical diſſertations, or proofs of ignorance, or inſincerity, (for this would be appealing to reaſon and truth), but by the unanſwerable argument of ſcorn and light contempt; it will not, I hope, be amiſs, on all occaſions, to place the characters of authors in a true light: that the candid reader may judge for himſelf; and diſtinguiſh as he ought between inſolence and ſuperior light. And beſides this, perhaps, the beſt way of dealing with infidelity, (as with other diſeaſes), is to prevent it.

THERE is no ſubject in this world, upon which abſtracted and ſpeculative men may not refine, far above common ſenſe, and common conceptions. But

men of plain talents, will, I believe, be at a loſs to think, why any writer ſhould ſo diligently compile ſuch a heap of teſtimonies, and with ſo many particularities, upon one point: and this in a court, where the language he wrote in, was familiar, (as the *Greek* language and learning was in that of the *Cæſars*), and to an emperor, and in an age, and country, perfectly well acquainted with the then ſtate of the world, but from one of theſe two ends; either to aſcertain an important truth, beyond all poſſibility of doubt, ---- or to make himſelf contemptible and deteſtable to all mankind, as the vileſt and ſhameleſſeſt impoſtor, that ever lived. And that JOSEPHUS was never conſider'd under this character, in the *Roman* court, but quite otherwiſe, is, I believe, paſt all doubt.

JOSEPHUS was a man of great quality, as well as learning; and not altogether clear of the ſuſpicion of being a *Free-thinker*; at leaſt, if examining all things, with great induſtry and attention, and then adhering to that which he thought beſt, can juſtly entitle any man to that character. He deſpiſed riches, and gave great proofs both of prudence, probity, and piety *. Proofs which needed no atteſtation at the court of *Rome*. He was a man of fortitude, ---- and when neceſſity called, he hazarded his life, for the religion and liberties of his country, ---- and he defended his religion, with his pen, at a time when both that and his country were ruined: without the leaſt proſpect of the reſtoration of either. I own, I cannot eaſily ſuſpect ſuch a man of impoſture; ----- (nor can I learn that ever he was ſuſpected) eſpecially, an impoſture which implies equal ſtupidity and depravity in the author; as an infinity of falſe quotations neceſſarily muſt. And if JOSEPHUS's veracity is to be depended upon, we then have the teſtimonies of all the antient nations, of the then known

* See his life.

world,

world, who had any early learning amongſt them, full to this point of the deluge. *Chaldæans*, *Egyptians*, *Syrians*, *Phœnicians*, *Jews!* with no more variety, than is commonly obſerved, in relation to all other facts confeſſedly true. And if we find no clear hiſtorical accounts of this matter, among the *Greeks*, we ſhould remember, that learning came late amongſt them; and that they had no hiſtories, memorials, or records of any kind, till long after the *Trojan* war. And that all that period of time, antecedent to this æra, is allow'd to be *fabulous*. And therefore we cannot reaſonably expect any account of this point, amongſt them, but ſuch as is involved in fables. And that there are memorials enough of that kind, to be met with in their mythology, will, I hope, be fully ſhewn hereafter.

In the next place, Eusebius* ſupplies us with an extract from Abydenus, concerning the deluge, to this purpoſe, *viz.* that *Chronos* (or *Saturn*) foretold *Siſithrus*, of a vaſt flood of rain, that was to fall; and commanded him, to hide whatever learning he could compile, in *Heliopolis*, a city of the *Sippari*; that he obeyed, and ſail'd immediately towards *Armenia*; that the divine prediction came quick upon him; and that on the third day, after the tempeſt was ceaſed, he made an experiment by birds, to find whether they could ſee any land emerging from the water: and that they, launching out into an uninterrupted ocean, and not knowing which way to ſteer, returned to *Siſithrus*. That others were ſent out after them, and that the third trial was ſucceſsful. The birds returning with their feet, (not as the common tranſlations have it, their *wings*) all mudded.---- He then adds, that the gods made him (*i. e. Siſithrus*) diſappear; but the ſhip arrived at *Armenia*; and afforded the people of the country, amulets of the wood, to drive away diſeaſes.

* Prepar. evangel. l. 9. c. 12. Paris ed.

NOR is ABYDENUS the only hiſtorian, that records this account of *Siſithrus*. ALEXANDER POLYHISTOR* gives the ſame account in ſubſtance; tho' with ſome more particularities. He ſays, that *Siſithrus* eſcaped a great deluge; — and takes notice, that his ſafety was owing to the premonition of *Saturn*. That he eſcaped by means of an ark, which he had provided for the purpoſe; in which alſo, birds, beaſts, and creeping things were preſerved with him.

HERE then are two other teſtimonies, differing in the manner, and in the ſtile, remarkably from one another, and from all the reſt: and yet agreeing, in the main, with *Moſes*; That there was a flood: — That it was foretold: — That a certain perſon was ſaved from it, and ſaved in an ark, or ſhip. — And the ſuperſtitions of the country, (mention'd by ABYDENUS), plainly imply an opinion, that there was ſomething ſacred in that veſſel. And what could ſo naturally ſuggeſt to them, that the wood of it, ſhould be an amulet againſt evil, as a conſtant tradition, that this veſſel was protected from all evil, by the immediate providence of God?

EUSEBIUS alſo ſupplies us with another teſtimony from the ſame ALEXANDER POLYHISTOR, which, I think, is out of the reach of all reaſonable exception; as it is the teſtimony of a candid and impartial writer, quoting the teſtimony of one who wrote in profeſſed enmity to the *Jews*.

THIS ALEXANDER POLYHISTOR, whom EUSEBIUS repreſents, as a writer of great talents and learning, eminently known to all men of letters, among the *Greeks*, quotes MELO in theſe words; —— *But* Melo, *who wrote induſtriouſly againſt the* Jews, *ſays, That after the deluge, a man who ſurvived, with his*

* Apud Cyril. contra Julian. l. 1.

ſons,

ſons, being expelled from his poſſeſſions in Armenia *by his country-men, traverſing the intermediate region, came to the mountainous part of* Syria, *then deſert, and that after three generations,* Abraham *was born,* &c.

Now this ſeems to be a jumbled account, made up of a confuſion of what paſs'd at the deluge, with *Terah*'s migration with his ſon *Abraham* from his own country. But thus much muſt confeſſedly be deduced from it; ---- that there was a deluge: ----that one man and his ſons eſcaped it: ---- and that this man afterwards reſided in *Armenia*. It muſt be owned, that this account contradicts the *Moſaic* in ſome circumſtances: And could we expect that an enemy ſhould agree with him in all? It is ſufficient to our purpoſe, that it confirms the main point in queſtion.

THESE are the teſtimonies cited by EUSEBIUS, upon the point before us. I will not pretend to acquit him, or any other mortal, of human infirmities; but this I will ſay, that he is clear of all ſuſpicion of fraud in theſe citations:

1*ſt*, INASMUCH as he hath eſcaped the cenſure of his cotemporaries upon that head.

2*dly*, INASMUCH as he hath never, that I know of, been detected, or even arraign'd of fraud by any ſubſequent writers, ---- tho' he hath ſufficiently been hated by many of them. SCALIGER, his mortal enemy, impeaches his judgment, but without any imputation upon his integrity; and many zealous *Chriſtians* of all ages, were ſo incenſed, * and are ſtill ſo incenſed againſt him, for hereſy, and have carried their revilings on that head, ſo far beyond any foundation of truth, that had it been poſſible to blaſt his cre-

* Jerom. Photius. Baronius, *&c.* See alſo the dedication of his Præpar. Evan. Pariſ. edit.

dit,

dit, infidels had long ſince been ſaved the toil of endeavouring it.

3*dly*, His character entirely acquits him to me, and, I think, muſt to all reaſonable men.

And 4*thly*, His whole conduct throughout this whole work of the *evangelick preparation*.

The reader, I hope, will indulge me a little upon theſe two laſt heads.

In the firſt place then, Eusebius knew how to think for himſelf (which, I will not preſume to ſay, is always the caſe of all thoſe that differ from him).

Whoever peruſes his *evangelick preparation*, will find, that he ranſacks the learning of the whole world; examines the theology of all nations; ſhews where they are faulty, and where right; examines the principles and opinions of all the philoſophers, of all ſects; compares them; ---- and upon the compariſon, prefers. Shews the *Platonick*, to be far preferable to all the reſt, ---- and why. Proves by a great variety of arguments, and compaſs of learning, that it was derived from the *Jews*. ---- Shews where it agrees, and where it differs; that *Plato* copied from *Moſes*; tho' not without mixture of fable and error. That where he agrees with him, his philoſophy is right, and rational; and his theology, worthy of God. ---- That where he differs from him, he is immoral, erroneous, and impious. And aſſigns this expreſly (on ſeveral occaſions) as the reaſon, why he rejected the philoſophy of *Plato*, and embraced that of the *Jews*.

All this conſider'd, I hope, I may be allow'd to ſay, that Eusebius knew how to think for himſelf. I will venture to ſay more, ---- if they who deſpiſe his authority, thought half as much, and as

freely

freely as he did, they would revere it more. At leaſt, I hope, they will forgive my infirmity in thinking ſo, ---- in thinking, that they would then be as much better believers, as they would unqueſtionably be wiſer men.

BUT EUSEBIUS did not content himſelf with examining the wiſdom of the whole world, and preferring the *Jewiſh* upon the compariſon. ---- He thought it alſo neceſſary, to enquire into truth of fact. ---- He conſider'd, that MOSES related many ſtrange things; the creation, paradiſe, the firſt pair, the deluſion of the ſerpent, the longevity of the firſt men, their corruption, and the deſtruction it drew down, in the deluge, ---- the building of *Babel* ſoon after, ---- the defeat of that attempt, ---- the diſperſion of mankind, ---- the deſcent of the *Jews* from *Abraham*, &c. He concluded very juſtly, that if ſuch men and things ever exiſted, or ſuch ſtrange events ever came to paſs, there muſt ſurely be ſome traditions, monuments, or memorials of them in the world. And accordingly he examines the archives, and ranſacks the hiſtories of all ages, and nations; their antiquities and traditions; and finds, that tho' they all differ'd vaſtly from one another, in the circumſtances of times, places, and names, yet that they all agreed with the *Moſaic* account in the main. It was obvious for him to apprehend, that the difference of languages, and the different care or negligence of nations in preſerving memorials, muſt, of neceſſity, cauſe a variety in the forementioned circumſtances, of times, places, and names: and that ſuch a variety, was ſo far from prejudicing, that it greatly confirm'd the truth of facts. And if he once conſider'd the authenticity of hiſtories, and compared the fidelity of nations, and their care in keeping the memorials of preceding times, it was impoſſible not to prefer the national care and fidelity of the *Jews* in this point, to that of all other nations in the world.

1*ſt*,

1*ſt*, BECAUSE they had publick officers appointed for this purpoſe; and both theſe officers, and the nation in general, were utterly regardleſs of all accounts of other countries; and ſo could neither borrow nor mix any of their own with them.

2*dly*, BECAUSE the original book, in which the hiſtory of the world, and their own nation, was contained, was profeſſedly, and beyond all ſuſpicion or poſſibility of doubt, both written and publiſhed in the preſence of their forefathers.

3*dly*, BECAUSE it was beyond all queſtion, the oldeſt book in the world.

AND 4*thly*, BECAUSE it was kept with more care than any other book in the world; in the moſt ſacred receſs of the tabernacle, firſt, and afterwards, of the temple; and continued there, till their national captivity and diſperſion; and at the ſame time, copies of this book, were in the hands of all the people: ---- every king, at his acceſſion to the throne, was obliged with his own hand, to tranſcribe a copy of this book, from the original; ---- and every private perſon, to get a great part of it, by heart. And every man amongſt them, bore about him, from his earlieſt infancy, a ſure mark of the national regard to it, from father to ſon, from age to age. It was read conſtantly and regularly to them all, at ſtated and fix'd times, by men appointed and maintained for that purpoſe. It was the great buſineſs of their lives, to ſtudy and to excel in the knowledge of it. And they who did ſo with moſt ſucceſs, were always in the higheſt eſteem amongſt them.

BESIDES all this, ---- this one book, was their ſole rule of duty, private, and publick. Their ſole *magna charta*, *code*, and ſtatute-book. For all their rights, privileges, and publick adminiſtration of juſtice.

IN

In one word, any man that conſidered this point, with due attention, could not but find, that it was their ſole rule of domeſtick life, civil government, and publick worſhip; and conſequently, that it was impoſſible to falſify it, in any thing material; foraſmuch, as there was a neceſſity of appealing to it, in ten thouſand inſtances, every day of the year.

And if, after all this, Eusebius acted irrationally, in accepting this book as genuine and authentick, and believing the facts contained in it, there is no ſuch thing as a reaſonable conduct, or a rational evidence, in this world.

I Begg leave to mention ſome other circumſtances of Eusebius's character.——Any man that conſiders the hiſtory of his times, and of his life, muſt, I think, find him as eminent, as any man of his own, or, perhaps, of any other age, for temper, moderation, dignity, diſintereſtedneſs, and a generous contempt of wealth and grandeur:——and, I muſt own, that theſe are to me in the place of ten thouſand proofs of integrity.——I cannot ſuſpect that ſpirit, of fraud or artifice;----*ſuſpect* did I ſay?---- I retract the expreſſion;---- I cannot but revere the memory, and venerate the vertue, the primitive vertue of that man, who could, from the influence of a good conſcience, look down upon grandeur! could, in the height of princely favour, refuſe the bounty of an emperor, to his epiſcopal church; and endow it liberally with his own!---- who could refuſe the richeſt and the nobleſt biſhoprick of all the *Eaſt*, (tho' elected and invited to it in the moſt honourable and engaging manner) upon a principle of apoſtolick integrity.

In the next place, I hope, I may be allow'd, with all humility, to ſuppoſe, that this author was not an ideot. I would not offend the more enlighten'd reader,---

der,---- I mean, not an ideot in any thing, but his *Chriſtian faith*. Nor can I learn from the hiſtories of thoſe times, that biſhops were then generally deemed abandoned, and void of principles. And yet, unleſs EUSEBIUS was ſo, to the moſt ſhameleſs degree imaginable, how is it poſſible to imagine, that he ſhould dare to forge or falſify numberleſs quotations, from authors then in the hands of all men of learning, declaring at the ſame time, that they were in the hands of all men of learning; and perfectly known to them. And that he ſhould do this, in a language then univerſally known! in that very act, challenging the whole world to detect him! and at the ſame time ſupplying them with the means to do it! I confeſs, I am a believer, I mean, a *Chriſtian believer*: but they who are not, will, I hope, forgive me, if I cannot go their lengths in credulity! I cannot believe this of EUSEBIUS, becauſe I think it were incredible of *Diagoras*,---- of the greateſt infidel now alive!

I OWN, that all biſhops are not now in all the veneration I could wiſh them. Men are ſufficiently inclined to credit things to their diſadvantage; yet I ſhould imagine him very credulous, who could believe this of a *Chriſtian* biſhop, even now! a biſhop, living in this remote region of the earth, and writing in the language of it; a language confined to itſelf, and its colonies! I ſhould imagine that ſuch a man would content himſelf, even in this happier age of free-thinking, with being ſilently in the wrong,--- without proclaiming his ſhame and ſetting his ſeal to it! and what ſeems to me ſo incredible of a modern biſhop *now*, and *here*, is, I ſhould think, much more ſo, of a primitive *Chriſtian* biſhop; (a biſhop who could refuſe the ſee of *Antioch*); in an age, when men ſeem to have been ſerious in religion.---- A Biſhop living in the light of *Aſia*, (*in luce Aſiæ*) as *Cicero* expreſſes it. And himſelf then one of the greateſt lights of *Aſia!* writing in a language known to the whole world!

AND

AND as the character of EUSEBIUS ſhews him ſuperior to all exception, his conduct throughout this whole work of the *evangelick preparation*, proves him yet more ſo, if poſſible. He undertook this great work, for the converſion of the heathen world; appealing to books in their own hands: Can there be a fairer mark of an honeſt conduct,---- of open honeſty, than this? If he had falſifyed in the appeal, muſt he not of neceſſity defeat his own purpoſe, with infamy to himſelf, and to his cauſe?

JOSEPHUS quoted a great number of works and writings in his hiſtory, and in his diſpute with *Apion*, (that is, in effect, with the heathen world): but EUSEBIUS, works and writers without number. I will venture to ſay, not leſs than four-ſcore, in his fifteen books of the *evangelick preparation*. Every quotation, either forged, or falſified, is a mark of impoſture; if he is an impoſtor, he can't have given leſs than a thouſand proofs of it. He quotes JOSEPHUS for many authorities, cited, and vouched unreproved, long before. And he himſelf quotes other authorities from ſome of the ſame books; ---- he quotes *Clemens Alexandrinus*, at large, who had himſelf quoted authorities, without number; and many other authors in the ſame manner; a ſtrange complicated ſeries of forgeries! a long chain link'd one into another, and yet no appearance of prevarication or corruption! no detection, even from anachroniſm or inconſiſtency!

IN one word, if this man hath forged and falſified, he hath done it in a manner, which no other man ever did from the foundation of the world.---- If he hath done ſo, it is a problem far above my abilities, to explain why he hath (to uſe *Æſchines*'s expreſſion to *Demoſthenes*) thus *abuſed all the marks and characters of honeſty, to all the purpoſes of villany*, and why no man hath ever vindicated this abuſe.

THE

THE ſum of all, is this,

WHAT I think in itſelf utterly incredible, I could believe of no man alive or dead.---- What I could believe of no man, I could leſs believe of a *Chriſtian* biſhop now.---- What I could believe of no *Chriſtian* biſhop now, I could yet leſs believe of EUSEBIUS.

DISSERTATION XIV.

Of other teſtimonies relating to the deluge.

I HAVE, in the preceding diſſertation, deſignedly omitted a teſtimony from *Beroſus*, cited by Sir *Walter Raleigh*, (b. 1. c. 7.) inaſmuch as the book now extant under the name of that writer, is juſtly ſuppoſed to be corrupted; nor have I been able to learn upon what authority that great man judged this paſſage genuine;---- but that he eſteemed it ſuch, I think is evident, from his quoting it without any mark or ſuſpicion of reproach. For ſoon after he hath cited it, he adds theſe words, "But *Beroſus* (who, "after *Moſes*, was one of the moſt antient, however "he hath been ſince deformed and corrupted) doth, "in the ſubſtance of all, agree with *Moſes* as touch-"ing the general flood, taking from thence the be-"ginning of his hiſtory in theſe words;---- *Before* "*that famous deſtruction of waters by which the world* "*univerſal periſhed:* witneſſing withal, that *Noah*, "with his wife *Titea*, and his three ſons with their "three wives (in all eight perſons) were only ſaved."

THAT Sir *Walter Raleigh* was a great man, and a good critick, will not, I believe, be denied: and that he never was ſuſpected of ſuperſtition, credulity, or unreaſonable partiality to religion, is undoubted: taking

taking it for granted then, that this quotation from *Beroſus* is genuine, I think the building of *Babel*, by the ſons of *Noah* by *Titea* (ſoon after the flood), with tower upon tower, might have given the moſt natural occaſion to the mythology of the invaſion of heaven by the *Titans*, heaping one mountain upon another.

I now proceed to enquire for ſome memorials of the deluge in the *Greek* mythology. And, I think, we need ſearch no further on this head, than their own fabulous accounts of the two deluges of *Ogyges* and *Deucalion:* following one another at the diſtance of about two hundred years.

Now particular deluges, in which whole mountainous regions (ſuch as *Attica* and *Theſſaly*) were overwhelmed with water, are (as I before obſerved) attended with more difficulties, and conſequently, are much leſs credible than an univerſal deluge. And therefore, ſince both theſe are ſuppoſed by them to have happen'd in that age, which is confeſſedly obſcure: long before they had the uſe of letters, or publick records of any kind, they deſerve to be no otherwiſe regarded, than as traditions of the univerſal deluge, corrupted agreeably to the ignorance of the times, and genius of that vain people, who vaunted their own antiquity above all other nations: and becauſe the oldeſt nations had memorials of one deluge, which drowned the world, they reſolved to be diſtinguiſh'd by the ſingularity of two deluges; but then we muſt do them this juſtice, that they always conſidered *Deucalion*'s deluge as univerſal; in which he ſaved himſelf, his wife, and ſome few others on the mountains of *Theſſaly*, and ſo was regarded as the reſtorer of mankind,---- as *Strabo* certifies*.

* L. 9.

CRITICKS alſo find, with ſufficient appearance of truth, their *Bacchus*, (antiently *Boachus*) in *Noah*, the firſt planter of vines; one letter changed either by accident or deſign, makes all the difference between their names; and *Noah*'s planting the vine, and ſubſequent drunkenneſs, recorded in the ſcripture, is foundation enough for all the reſt of the fable of *Bacchus*.

THEIR *Janus* alſo, who ſaw before and behind, is, doubtleſs no other than *Noah*; who ſaw the antediluvian, and poſt-diluvian worlds.---- And Sir *Walter Raleigh* obſerves, that this name might very naturally be derived from the *Hebrew* word יין [*jain*], which ſignifies wine.

NOAH ſeems alſo to be fully figured out to us under the character of *Saturn*.

WHO is repreſented at one time, as driven down from *Olympus* by his ſon. ----- At another, as devouring all his children, except three, which were concealed from him. At another, as dividing the whole world between his three remaining ſons.---- And at another, as the common parent of mankind, and reclaiming the ſavage lives of the firſt mortals, who lived on mountains, and fed upon acorns:---- giving them laws, and teaching them culture, with ſeveral other circumſtances;---- ſuch as only one language among mankind in his time,---- his being a teacher of juſtice,---- and author of that law which forbad to behold the gods naked*.

THE deſcent of *Noah* from the high mountain, on which the ark reſted; the deſtruction of all his own family with the reſt of mankind, except his three ſons; and the diſtribution of the world afterwards among theſe three ſons, and their deſcendants, and he himſelf

* See Bochart's Phaleg. l. 1. c. 1.

being

being the parent of all the race of mankind then in the world, and their lawgiver in the character of common parent, being alſo an husbandman, and teaching the art of cultivating the earth to his ſons; his nakedneſs being ſeen by one of his wicked ſons, and the curſe denounced upon him for it;—All theſe circumſtances united, very naturally gave riſe to all theſe fabulous accounts of *Saturn*, among a people who delighted in fiction, and deſpiſed plain truths.

IF we proceed from the mythology of the *Greeks*, to the more ſerious writings of their philoſophers and philologers, we ſhall find not only clear undiſguiſed memorials of the deluge amongſt them, but likewiſe ſuch as exactly correſpond with the *Moſaic* account. I ſhall mention but three of theſe writers,—*Plato*, *Plutarch*, and *Lucian*.

PLATO's teſtimony is thus quoted by Sir *Walter Raleigh* (l. 1. c. 7. §. 4.) "And *Plato* in *Timæo* produceth an *Egyptian* prieſt, who recounted to *Solon*, "out of the holy books of *Egypt*, the ſtory of the "flood univerſal, which (ſaith he) happened long "before the *Grecian* inundations.

PLATO alſo mentions the deluge in the third book of his laws.

PLUTARCH's teſtimony is thus cited by *Ray*, in his *conſequences of the deluge*, p. 65.

"*PLUTARCH*, in his book *de ſolentia animalium*, tells us, that thoſe who have written of "*Deucalion*'s flood, report, that there was a dove "ſent out of the ark by *Deucalion*, which returning "again into the ark, was a ſign of the continuance "of the flood; but flying quite away, and not returning any more, was a ſign of ſerenity, and that "the earth was drained.

THE ſame author quotes *Lucian*'s teſtimony upon this head, p. 67. in the following manner;

" *LUCIAN*, in his *Timon*, and in his book *de* " *Dea Syria*, ſets forth the particulars of *Deucalion*'s, " after the example of *Noah*'s, flood. Λευκαλίων δε μόνος " ανθρώπων ἐλίπετο εἰς γενεὴν δευτεραν ἐυβυλίης τε κ᾽ τῦ ἐυσεβέος ἕνεκα, " &c. Deucalion *was the only man that was left for a* " *ſecond generation, for his prudence and piety ſake; and* " *was ſaved in this manner: he made a great ark, and* " *got aboard it, with his wife and children; and to him* " *came ſwine, and horſes, and lions, and ſerpents, and* " *all other living creatures, which the earth maintains,* " *according to their kinds by pairs; and he received them* " *all, and they hurt him not; for there was by divine in-* " *ſtinct, a great friendſhip among them; and they ſailed* " *together in the ark, ſo long as the waters prevailed.*" And in his *Timon* he ſaith, " *That* Noah *laid up in his* " *ark plenty of all proviſions for their ſuſtenance.*" And leſt *Lucian* ſhould be ſuſpected of being beholden to revelation, for any information in this point, he takes care to let us know, that he had this account of the ark and deluge, from the *Grecians*.

THE ſame learned author, Mr. *Ray*, quotes other teſtimonies upon this head, which the curious reader may more largely conſult at his leiſure.

THE teſtimonies of *Latin* writers ſucceed next in order, to thoſe of the *Greeks*. Of theſe alſo I ſhall only cite ſome men of note, chiefly theſe; *Fabius Pictor*, *Pliny*, and *Ammianus Marcellinus*. The firſt of theſe is thus quoted by Sir *Walter Raleigh* (l. 1. c. 7. §. 7.)

" OF the antiquity of *Janus*, *Fabius Pictor* giveth " this teſtimony: [I omit the *Latin*] *In the time of* " Janus (ſaith he *there was no monarchy: for the deſire* " *of rule, had not then folded itſelf about the hearts*

" *of*

" *of men.* Janus *firſt taught the people to ſacrifice wine*
" *and meal: he firſt ſet up altars, inſtituted gardens and*
" *ſolitary groves, wherein they uſed to pray; with other*
" *holy rites and ceremonies.*" Sir *Walter* then proceeds thus, — " A greater teſtimony than this, there can-
" not be found among the *heathen*, which in all agrees
" ſo well with the ſcriptures. For firſt, whilſt *Noah*
" flouriſhed, there was not any king, or monarch;
" *Nimrod* being the firſt that took on him ſovereign
" authority. Secondly, *Noah*, after the flood, was
" the firſt that planted the vine, and became an huſ-
" bandman; and therefore offered the firſt-fruits of
" both (to wit) wine and meal. Thirdly, he was the
" firſt that raiſed an altar, and offered ſacrifice to God,
" a thankſgiving for his merciful goodneſs towards
" him."

HERE we ſee that the *Janus* of the *Greeks*, is evidently the *Noah* of the bible; with perfect agreement in the main; and no more difference than ſuch as naturally diſtinguiſhes true hiſtory from uncertain and fabulous tradition.

THE next teſtimony in order is that of *Pliny*; or, to ſpeak more properly, that of *Pliny*, *Mela*, and *Solinus*, united, which Sir *Walter Raleigh* (*ibid.*) mentions in this manner; ---- " For whereas *Mela*, *Pliny*,
" and *Solinus* witneſs, that the city of *Joppe* in *Judæa*,
" was founded before the flood; and that (notwith-
" ſtanding the height of waters) there remained on
" certain altars of ſtone, the title of the king, and
" of his brother *Phineus*, with many of the grounds
" of their religion: ſure it is no where found, *&c.*

FROM the teſtimony of theſe three learned writers, who made it their buſineſs to enquire after every thing curious over the face of the earth, added to *Joſephus*'s account of the pillars of *Seth*, we may fairly infer, that there was an univerſal tradition not only of ſome pre-

monition given to mankind before the flood, of that approaching ruin, but likewiſe, that ſome monuments of the ante-diluvian world out-laſted that devaſtation; ---- for this ſeems to be the moſt natural reaſon of the principles of religion inſcribed upon ſuch maſſy and durable altars here: (for ſuch they muſt be ſuppoſed, when they are ſuppoſed ſtrong enough to bear the force of the flood) as of the improvements of ſcience engraved on the pillars of *Seth*. And this obſervation will be yet further confirmed by the teſtimony of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, which follows next in order.

In the 22d book of his hiſtory (c. 15. p. 263. of *Gronovius*'s edition), among other curioſities of *Egypt*, he deſcribes their *Syrinxes* in theſe words; — *Sunt & ſyringes ſubterranei quidam & flexuoſi receſſus, quos, (ut fertur) periti rituum vetuſtorum, adventare diluvium præſcii, metuenteſque ne ceremoniarum obliteraretur memoria, penitus operoſis digeſtos fodinis per loca diverſa ſtruxerunt: et exciſis parietibus volucrum ferarumque genera multa ſculpſerunt, & animalium ſpecies innumeras quas hierographicas litteras appellarunt.*

The ſenſe of which, in *Engliſh*, is thus; — "There are alſo (in *Egypt*) *Syrinxes*, certain ſubterraneous and winding receſſes, which (as it is ſaid) "men skill'd in antient rites, foreknowing the "coming of the deluge, and fearing that the memory of their ceremonies ſhould be blotted out, "hew'd and faſhion'd out of quarries in ſeveral places, "with immenſe labour, and carved on the walls "which they had ſo hewn, many kinds of fowls, and "wild beaſts, and figures of animals innumerable, "which they call hieroglyphick, (ſo ſome read the "text) or ſacred characters."

The learned commentator, who publiſhed this edition, cites ſeveral other teſtimonies to this purpoſe, par-

particularly that of *Manetho* from *Eusebius*. — If then we compare these accounts with that of *Abydenus* beforemention'd, who tells us, that *Sisithrus* was commanded by *Saturn*, before the flood came on, to compile all the learning he could, and deposite it in the city of *Heliopolis*, we shall have reason to believe, that the tradition of warning given to mankind, of the approaching destruction by a deluge, was familiar over the world; and consequently, we are well justified in believing from the bible, that God gave notice of it, by *Noah*, an hundred and twenty years before it arrived. And if these caverns were really formed before that time, as possibly they might; that time will, I believe, be thought little enough to be allow'd for finishing works of such immense labour and art.

In collecting these testimonies of antiquity concerning the deluge, I have omitted numbers cited by the learned authors whom I have consulted in collecting these; particularly *Bochart*. It were easy to lengthen out this list of witnesses with a long series of poets, historians, geographers, philologers, antiquaries; it being, in truth, much more difficult to make choice, than to find numbers: but as the reader, is, I believe, by this time, fully satisfied, if not sated, I shall only beg his patience and attention to two or three testimonies, of a different kind from those already urged.

The first is, that the tradition of the deluge was as familiar in *America* upon its first discovery, as in any other known region of the earth.

The second is, that as the names of cities, countries, rivers, *&c.* are usually derived from their founders or original inhabitants, or their descendants sollicitous to do honour to their ancestors, Sir *Walter Raleigh* observes, that many rivers, cities, and moun-

tains, were denominated from *Noah*; — his words are theſe;

"FURTHERMORE, to the end that the memory of this ſecond parent of mankind might the better be preſerved, there were founded by his iſſues many great cities, which bear his name, with many rivers and mountains; which many times forgat that it was done in his regard, becauſe the many names given him, brought the ſame confuſion to places as to himſelf. Notwithſtanding all which, we find the city of *Noah* upon the banks of the *Red-ſea*, and elſewhere: the river of *Noas* in *Thrace*, which *Strabo* calls *Noarus*; *Ptolemy* *Danus*; dividing *Illyria* from *Pannonia*. Thus much for the name."

ALSO that many countries, regions, *&c.* were denominated from *Noah*'s deſcendants, mentioned by *Moſes*, needs no proof.

IN the laſt place, as it was natural that upon the invention of coins, memorials of remarkable events ſhould be preſerved in their impreſſions, and inſcriptions, by perſons moſt concerned to do ſo; neither is this kind of teſtimony wanting to perpetuate the memory of the deluge.

NOW not to inſiſt upon the impreſſion of a ſhip, recorded and ſeen on the oldeſt *Italian* coins in memory of *Saturn*, who was certainly no other than *Noah*; I ſhall beg leave to mention two later coins, whoſe impreſſions are found, together with a long and learned diſſertation upon one of them, at the end of *Falconerius*'s *inſcriptiones athleticæ*, printed at *Rome*, *A. D.* 1668. ---- Theſe coins this learned antiquary treats as very rare and valuable curioſities; and conſider'd as ſuch, by all virtuoſo's of eminence. ---- And as that diſſertation is ſcarce in this part of the world, the reader,

ΑΥΤ ϹΕΠΤ ϹΕΟΥΗΡΟϹΠΕΡΤΙ
ΕΠΙΑΓΩΝ ΟΘΕΤΟΥΑΡΤΕΜΑΓ
ΝΗΤΩΝ
ΑΠΑΜΕΩ
Ν

ΑΥΤ·ΚΙΟΥΛ·ΟΙΛΙΠΠΟϹ·ΑΥΤ·
ΕΤΓΜΑ ΑΛ ΕΞΑΝΑΡ
ΝΩΕ
ΟΥΒ·ΑΡΧΙ·ΑΠ
ΑΜΕΩΝ

reader, I hope, will not be diſpleaſed to ſee an extract of it, as ſhort and as exact as I could make it.

IT was cuſtomary with the *Roman* provinces, when viſited by any of the *Cæſars*, to compliment them by ſtriking coins on the occaſion, to perpetuate the honour done them. Two of theſe, one in honour of *Severus*, and the other of *Philippus Arabs*, are found with an ark, and other memorials of the deluge, on the reverſe. The inſcription of *Severus*'s coin is thus diſtinguiſhed and explained by *Falconerius*.

ΑΥΤ. Κ. Λ. ΣΕΠΤ. ΣΕΟΥΗΡΟϹ ΠΕΡΤΙ. *Imp. Cæſ. L. Sept. Severus Pertinax.* [The emperor *Cæſar Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax*]. As to the reverſe of this coin, our learned antiquary ſeems to be loſt in a refinement in relation to the figure of the *ark*, which, I own, I don't well comprehend; all that I ſee, is, that it exhibits to a common eye, the figure of a ſquare box, floating on the water; open at the top, with the figures of a man and woman in it; a bird ſtanding at one corner, ſuppoſed to be a dove, and another on the wing, approaching the oppoſite corner, with a branch of laurel in its talons. --- Before the ark are the figures of a man and woman reſembling thoſe within, and ſuppoſed to be *Deucalion* and *Pyrrha*; with their right-hands lifted up, ſeemingly in a poſture of devotion: or, as my author thinks, with their hands prepared to take up thoſe ſtones which they were commanded to caſt behind them, for the reſtoration of the human race. All this needs no comment: it explains itſelf. --- The inſcription on this ſide of the coin, our learned author diſtinguiſhes into the following words. ΕΠΙ ΑΓΩΝΟΘΕΤΟΥ ΑΡΤΕ. ΜΑΓΝΗΤΩΝ ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ. *Sub Agonotheta Arte. Magnetum Apamenſium.* The word *Arte.* here, is an abridgment of the name of the magiſtrate who preſided over the publick exer-

ciſes:

ciſes: and the ſenſe of the inſcription is this, that *this coin was ſtruck in the magiſtracy of* Arte. *preſident of the publick exerciſes of the* Magneſians *and* Apamæans. The reader is to know, or remember, that the preſidency of the publick games and exerciſes, was a magiſtracy of great dignity in the heathen world; inſomuch, that the years were diſtinguiſhed in their publick records, by the names of ſuch magiſtrates; who were known by a great variety of titles and privileges.

THE learned author of this diſſertation, ſuppoſes the memory of *Deucalion*, to have been preſerved, as part of the religious rites of the *Syrian goddeſs*; before whom a repreſentation of *Deucalion*, and the deluge, was carried twice a year in thoſe ſolemn proceſſions, wherein water was carried from the ſea, to the temple of that goddeſs, at *Hieropolis*: in memory of *Deucalion*'s deliverance from the deluge, after which he is ſaid to have dedicated this temple. — And as this goddeſs was for a long time in high eſteem in *Syria*, her worſhip might naturally ſpread from city to city, and from province to province. From *Hieropolis* of *Syria*, it might naturally reach to *Hieropolis* in *Phrygia*; and from thence to *Apamæa* of the ſame province; which our antiquary judges to be the place where this coin was ſtruck, from its neighbourhood to *Magneſia*; the citizens of both places being here jointly named.

BUT if I may be indulged a conjecture, in oppoſition to the opinion of this very learned antiquary, I own, I am more inclined to believe, that the *Apamæa* here meant, is that of *Meſopotamia*, becauſe both *Herodian* and *Dio* mention *Severus*'s being in that country; and, I think, one may fairly collect from *Dio*, that he ſojourned in *Meſopotamia* during the ſiege of *Byzantium*, which laſted three years. At leaſt it is certain, he was there when this city was taken: (and he by that means more confirmed in the empire), which

which was a proper occaſion for the cities of that region to pay their compliments to him: — tho' there wanted not alſo occaſion of doing it, not long after; when he redeemed them from the invaſion of the *Parthians*.

NOR is the union of the *Magneſians* and *Apamæans* on the ſame coin, any objection to this opinion; ſince this author hath himſelf furniſhed us with many inſtances of the names of very diſtant people joined on the ſame coin, from an ὁμονοια in religion, *i.e.* from a communion in religious worſhip. And this opinion is farther ſtrengthen'd from the next coin of *Philippus Arabs*, which hath the word ΝΩΕ, inſcribed on the ſide of the ark: which is allow'd to be the name of *Noah* among the *Chaldeans*; and which this learned writer doth himſelf believe to be ſo intended in this place: and hath taken care to ſhew that there is no room here for any ſuſpicion of a βυστροφηδὸν, *i.e.* a reading from the left hand; tho' the learned Mr. *Saurin* hath, thro' miſtake (occaſion'd by the perplexity of *Falconerius*'s ſtile in this place) imagined, that this eminent antiquary would have it ſo read. Beſides that the neighbourhood of *Arabia* to *Meſopotamia*, makes it probable, that a city of that region was more likely to compliment *Philippus Arabs*, ſen. a native of their own neighbourhood, on his acceſſion to the imperial throne, who was inveſted with the empire on the banks of the *Euphrates*, in a region not very remote, poſſibly in the neighbourhood of that very city.

ADD to all this, that tho' the inhabitants of *Meſopotamia* might have received the religion of the *Syrian* goddeſs, yet it is highly probable that the memory of *Noah* muſt ſtill ſubſiſt in a country where *Noah* himſelf, in all probability, lived, and built the ark; (as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter) and where *Babel*, the work of his ſons, might naturally (tho' in ruins) preſerve

preſerve ſome memorial of him; and our learned author doth, for many reaſons, conclude both coins to be the work of one city.

DISSERTATION XV.

Some difficulties relating to Noah's *ark conſidered.*

THERE are few things more apt to offend men of humble and upright diſpoſitions, than the reſtleſs and unwearied induſtry of libertine ſpirits, to blaſt and to overthrow the credit of revelation, by all the laboured objections of abſurdity, and impoſſibility, as well as by all the evil arts of cavil and calumny! — and yet when it is found upon enquiry, that theſe objections, never fail to end in new evidence of the truths they were intended to oppoſe, nor theſe calumnies, but in the confuſion and reproach of their authors; whilſt we lament the deſtruction of theſe vain deluded mortals, we muſt be thankful to the great Governour of the world, for the infinite advantages, derived from their arrogance, upon the humble believer.

How far, the objections I am now to recount, and the anſwers to them, will give juſt ground for this reflection, the reader will beſt judge.

In the firſt place then, it is objected, That if *Noah* had been an hundred and twenty years, in preparing the ark, (*i. e.* from the notice God gave him, that *his ſpirit ſhould not ſtrive with man*, beyond that ſpace of time, as many divines have believed, and ſtill do believe, the timbers muſt all have decayed, and periſhed before the end of that period.

To

To this I anſwer, That the objection is founded upon ſuch groſs ignorance, as I am almoſt aſhamed to refute. Since it is notorious, that the timbers of many buildings, now extant, in this iſland, have vaſtly out-laſted that period, undecay'd: --- and yet there are timbers, believed to be much more durable than oak. ---- The ark, is for very good reaſons, believed both by *Fuller* and *Bochart*, to have been framed of cypreſs, the moſt durable wood in the known world; and the leaſt liable to the impreſſions of air, and vermin: tho' if it had been leſs durable, the *aſphaltus* with which it was ſheathed, both on the inſide, and the out, may very well be ſuppoſed capable of preſerving it, many centuries; as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter.

Besides this, I think, a conſiderable ſpace of time, muſt be allow'd, for collecting (not to ſay tameing) the creatures to be preſerved. Nay, ſome men have thought this ſo mighty a difficulty, that they have imagined it an unanſwerable objection, againſt the *Moſaic* account of the deluge, as it is generally underſtood, *i. e.* againſt its being univerſal: inaſmuch as ſome of the creatures, if you ſuppoſe them diſperſed, as they are now, at great diſtances from the place where they were created, could not (as they think) return to that region where the ark was built, in leſs than twenty thouſand years *.

But this objection confutes itſelf; becauſe at that rate of travelling, they could not have reached the regions in which they are now found, to this day.

But this point will, I think, be fairly cleared in a few words. ---- The country of *Eden* is very reaſonably ſuppoſed by learned men to be the next adjacent

* See *Voſſius*, as he is quoted by Mr. *Saurin*, in his diſcourſe on the deluge, *octavo*, p. 99.

to the garden of that name, from whence *Adam* was exiled; and as all the early accounts of that country paint it out to us as one of the moſt fruitful and delicious regions of the earth, (tho' now greatly changed) there is no reaſon to imagine that *Adam* ſought for any habitation beyond it.

WHEN *Cain* ſlew his brother, he was exiled from thence; and he and his deſcendants ſought their dwellings elſewhere; but there is all the reaſon in the world to believe, that *Seth*, and his deſcendants, continued in their father *Adam*'s abode, and the regions adjacent: and as *Noah* was a deſcendant from *Seth*, in a direct line, there is no doubt but that he dwelt in that country, or not far from it, that is, not far from *Babylon*: for that the ark was built thereabouts, many circumſtances concur to perſuade us. There is *Gopher* wood (very reaſonably ſuppoſed to be cypreſs) found in abundance. ---- There alſo, is the *aſphaltus*, with which the ark was fenced from the impreſſion of the waters, both on the outſide and the in. ---- And not very far from thence, is *Ararat*, whither the ark may very naturally be ſuppoſed to be carried by the ſwelling of the waters from the ſea, when *the fountains of the deep were broken up*. ---- And in that ſituation, there is not the leaſt reaſon to imagine, that any one *ſpecies* of animals was out of *Noah*'s reach. Whereas, if he had been at any great diſtance from *Arabia*, (ſuppoſing the earth nearly circumſtanced as it is now) I think ſome difficulties might ariſe, in relation to the wild aſs, and the oſtrich, no where elſe found, that I know of.

THE next difficulty that occurs, is in relation to the capacity of the ark: which ſome men imagine too ſmall to contain all the *ſpecies* of creatures, with ſufficient food for a year.

BUT

BUT this point, hath been ſo fully diſcuſs'd and cleared, by *Buteo*, Sir *Walter Raleigh*, Biſhop *Wilkins*, and many other men of great abilities, ----- able naturaliſts, and skilful computers, that I have nothing to do but to refer the reader to their works, for full ſatisfaction upon this head: ---- and yet I cannot but obſerve, how providential it is, that this objection to divine revelation, ſhould be urged, in an age, when a more ample diſcovery of ſeveral new regions of the world, and a moſt exact and diligent enquiry into the nature and number of the ſeveral kinds of animals all over the earth, have ſufficiently ſhewn how ill it is founded.

I HAVE little to add upon this point, (and indeed I imagine, that little can be added), ---- and therefore I ſhall only beg leave to obſerve, that the moderate dimenſions allow'd by *Moſes* for the ark, is to me a convincing proof of his veracity; a veſſel which was to contain a certain number of the kinds of all land animals upon the face of the earth, with ſufficient food for ſo long a ſpace, every one imagines at firſt ſight, ſhould be prodigious; ---- and therefore, when we hear *Moſes* relate the dimenſions of it, directed by God, ---- the length three hundred cubits, the breadth fifty, and the height thirty, without giving himſelf the leaſt trouble to explain, or to account for any objections, that might riſe againſt it; How is this to be accounted for, but from a conſciouſneſs of truth? Falſhood, or conjecture, would have taken good care to be on the ſure ſide. ---- A man who had written from rational conjecture, would naturally have been carried to ſupport his hypotheſis with reaſons, and computations: and a man who had written at adventures, or upon any other foundation than certainty, would have been very apt to have enlarged; ---- probably more than doubled theſe dimenſions; and nothing but certain knowledge, could have treated a

ſubject

ſubject of ſo much importance, at once with ſo much ſimplicity, and unconcern.

IF men chuſe to aſcribe that knowledge to certain information derived from *Noah*, rather than immediately from God, I ſhall not contend with them upon that account: but if any man, doubt or deny that the dimenſions aſſigned by *Moſes*, are juſt, his ſure way of juſtifying his doubts, will be by attempting to confute *Moſes* upon this head: which if he ſhall think fit to do, in a publick manner, I here venture to aſſure him before-hand, that he will be made, I mean, that he will make himſelf, pitiable in point of ignorance, to his fondeſt admirers; and utterly contemptible and ridiculous to the reſt of mankind.

I CAN'T quit this ſubject, without taking notice of the unneceſſary pains, ſome ingenious men have been at, to provide fleſh for the ſupport of the carnivorous animals ſhut up in the ark: when it is beyond all controverſy, that the ſtomachs of all carnivorous animals, are fitted for the digeſtion of fruits and vegetables; and that ſuch food would be more ſalutary, both for them and their keepers, and create a leſs demand of drink, throughout the courſe of ſo long a confinement: and poſſibly God's foreknowledge of the wiſdom, and, perhaps, the neceſſity, of confining *Noah* and his companions to a vegetable diet, for ſo long a time, was one wiſe reaſon, among others, of not granting fleſh for human food, before the flood ---- And as no proviſion of fleſh was neceſſary, either for himſelf, or the carnivorous creatures that were with him, on that occaſion, there is not the leaſt foundation from the text to believe, that any ſuch proviſion was made; or that more than ſeven animals of any one ſpecies, were taken into the ark.

THERE is one difficulty ſtill remaining, and that is, that the defenders of revelation ſuppoſe the remains

mains of the ark to have laſted ſo many centuries after the flood: nay, *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks of this as a thing paſt all doubt in his time.---- A duration which is thought utterly impoſſible, and conſequently, incredible.

To this I beg leave to anſwer, That if theſe gentlemen had thoroughly enquired into the nature of *aſphaltus*, and the teſtimonies of antiquity, as well as later obſervations in relation to the duration of timbers, they would either decline this objection, or lay much leſs ſtreſs upon it.

Sir *Walter Raleigh* quotes *Pliny*'s teſtimony on this head, in the following manner,---- (l. 1. ch. 7. p. 86.) "*Pliny* affirmeth, that in *Egypt* it was the uſe to "build ſhips of cedar, which the worms eat not; "and he avoweth, that he ſaw in *Utica*, in the tem- "ple of *Apollo*, cedar beams, laid in the time of the "foundation of the city; and that they were ſtill "found in his time, which was about 1188 years after."

We are alſo aſſured by ſome late very curious and learned travellers, that mummies, undoubtedly prepared and depoſited by the antient *Egyptians*, are found in coffins of ſycamore wood, the timber of which is ſtill ſound; tho' lying under-ground, for at leaſt, two thouſand years.

Now ſycamore muſt, I believe, be allow'd leſs durable than cedar, as cedar is eſteemed leſs durable than cypreſs *.---- Now if this ſycamore, which laſts thus

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* See the teſtimonies of antiquity concerning the duration of cypreſs in *Fuller*'s *Miſcell. ſacra*, l. 4. c. 5. and *Bochart*'s *Phaleg.* l. 1. c. 4.—— and this doubtleſs was the foundation of the poetick fable that *Jove*'s ſcepter was made of cypreſs; to imply the perpetuity of his empire.

long, unprotected, were ſheathed with *aſphaltus*, I think it might very reaſonably be ſuppoſed capable of enduring from the foundation of the world to this day, ---- it being the known property of *aſphaltus*, to harden in the air, and yet more in the water: and to give ſecurity and durability, to all kinds of bodies, infinitely beyond any thing that ever was heard of.

We know that when *Nitocris* joined the new and the old palace in *Babylon* by an arch, ſhe firſt ſecured the top of it with a good coat of *aſphaltus*, and then turn'd the river over it; well knowing that water could neither penetrate nor waſh it away. ---- It is alſo well known, that *Nebuchadnezzar* ſecured the great arches, which ſupported his penſile gardens, with a covering of reeds, ſmeared over with *aſphaltus*: and ſome late travellers (who, I am perſuaded, never heard of this account of *Nebuchadnezzar*) report, that layers of theſe reeds are found ſtill entire among the ruins of that great city; cover'd (as they call it) with *the earth of the country*.

Now if other timbers laſt ſo long without *aſphaltus*, and reeds with it, is there any thing incredible in the account we have of the duration of ſome parts of the ark? ---- So far from it, ---- that, for my own part, I am much more inclined to credit the very lateſt accounts we have of this matter. And thoſe, if I miſtake not, are from the travels of *Benjamin* the *Jew*, who is thus quoted by *Bochart*, (*Phal.* l. 1. c. 3.) *Ita Benjamin Judæus ſcribit, ſe Niſibi profectum, biduo veniſſe*, (the reader will, I hope, excuſe me for not troubling him with the *Hebrew*) *ad inſulam filii Omar, quæ eſt in medio Tigride, ad radices montium Ararat: unde quatuor diſtat millibus locus in quo requievit arca Noæ. Addit Omarem Alcitabi filium arcæ reliquias*

ex

ex illo monte in inſulam tranſtuliſſe, & fabricaſſe ex illis templum quoddam Mahometanum.

In *Engliſh* thus:

"Likewise *Benjamin* the *Jew* writes, that he "came in two days journey from *Niſibis* to *Omars* "iſland, which is in the midſt of *Tygris*, at the bot- "tom of the mountains of *Ararat*; at four miles diſ- "tance from the place where *Noah*'s ark reſted. He "adds, that *Omar*, the ſon of *Alcitab*, removed the "remains of the ark from that mountain, into the "the iſland, and built a kind of *Mahometan* temple "out of them."

How far this account is credible or incredible (in point of poſſibility of the timber's duration for ſo long a period), the reader will beſt judge from what has already been ſaid, and referred to, upon that point.

The only appearance of a remaining difficulty is, whether cypreſs be a proper timber for ſhipping; and that it is remarkably good and fit for that purpoſe, and was always accounted ſo, *Bochart* proves (*ibid.*) beyond all poſſibility of doubt, by a great number of quotations.

Having conſider'd theſe difficulties relating to the ark, I hope, I ſhall be indulged in conſidering two new difficulties, relating to the flood; which I had not the good fortune to meet with, till my diſſertations on that ſubject were printed.

The firſt is this, — that the *Strata* of the earth are not always found in the order of their ſpecifick gravities; — and conſequently, this ſtate of things is owing to ſome other cauſe, and not the deluge; ---- becauſe, there, the *Strata* which are ſuppoſed to be

waſh'd off, muſt have ſubſided according to their ſpecifick gravities -- whereas now, layers of ſand, which is heavier, are frequently found overlayers of marle, which is lighter.

I ANSWER, That little particular exceptions of this kind, are ſo far from impeaching the main truth of the deluge, that they confirm it: For as this vaſt flood of waters, did not abate at once, but gradually, things could only ſubſide in ſuch a manner, as was conſiſtent with the continual agitation of tides and winds, for ſo long a ſpace. ---- All tides are in the nature of floods; and when agitated with winds, and working down the ſides of mountains, muſt of neceſſity produce the ſame effects with other floods; that is, they muſt diſturb the ordinary regular ſtate of things; and as naturally throw layers of ſand upon lighter *Strata*, as floods now throw layers of ſand upon meadows: ---- And therefore that which is, and muſt be, a neceſſary conſequence of the flood, can never be a juſt or a reaſonable objection to its exiſtence.

THE next objection is this; ---- That oyſters, and other ſhell-fiſh are found in ſuch vaſt quantities on the tops of ſome mountains, that it is not to be imagin'd how they ſhould be ſo numerous, unleſs they had bred there. *

THAT is --- a ſtrange effect, which could be produced no imaginable way, but by the deluge, is made an objection to its cauſe. ---- If one ſhell-fiſh could be thrown upon the top of a mountain by the deluge, why not a thouſand? Why ſhould not the ſame cauſe, operating the ſame way, upon the ſame matter, pro-

* See *Ray*'s conſequences of the deluge.

duce

duce the ſame effect in a thouſand, in ten thouſand inſtances, as well as one, ---- if we ſuppoſe materials enough to be operated upon? And that there were then ſhell-fiſh enough in the ſea, to be thrown up on the tops of mountains, is I believe not doubted.

BUT, after all, ---- why might not theſe creatures be allow'd to multiply upon the tops of mountains during that period? — The buſineſs of drowning the world, ſeems to have been over in forty days; and the waters were upon the tops of the mountains for ſome months after this: ---- if we conſider the duration of ſome of the beds of theſe animals, and the perpetual ſupplies they afford to great cities, for ſo many years together, we ſhall have reaſon to believe, that they not only multiply very faſt, but come ſoon to maturity; ---- at leaſt, many of them may well be ſuppoſed adhering to the parent-ſhell, at this time, as at all others: and theſe may at leaſt be allow'd time enough to come to perfection, before the end of the flood; and might, for ought I know, be manifold the number of their parents.

BESIDES all this, — Might not many of theſe hills have hollows on their ſummits, as thouſands are ſeen to have at this Day? And might not the waters there depoſited, continue for ſome months more, if not years, in a condition good enough to ſupport theſe creatures? — And what if great numbers of theſe creatures are now found upon mountains, where no ſuch hollows are ſeen: ---- mountains are agreed to abate in their height; and why might not continual rains for ſuch a ſeries of centuries, have waſh'd off theſe mounds, where this water was depoſited at the flood; and ſo left the ſummits of thoſe mountains bare, and dry?

ALL this, might, nay muſt have happen'd, in many inſtances! And therefore all theſe objections, are ſtill further and ſtronger confirmations of the truth of the *Moſaic* hiſtory. And if this hiſtory, in this inſtance, the leaſt credible of any thing in the whole compaſs of revelation, be true, the infidel ſhould, methinks, be fortify'd with abundant evidence, before he diſclaims any other part of it.

AND here I make an end both of collecting teſtimonies, and conſidering objections, relating to the flood — What weight theſe objections have, and theſe teſtimonies ſhould have, the reader will beſt judge — teſtimonies ſo numerous, ſo various, ſo diſconcerted, and yet ſo connected — is it poſſible that they can deceive! Could all nations conſpire with all nations, and all ages with all ages, to impoſe upon themſelves, and their poſterity! Could the religion of the true God, and the religion of the *Syrian* goddeſs, the *Jews*, and the Heathens, that hated them, *Moſes*, and *Melo* his enemy; — tradition conſpire with hiſtory, and hiſtory with mythology! men of all characters, complexions, conditions and perſuaſions, *Plutarch* with *Beroſus*, *Benjamin* the *Jew* with *Chryſoſtom*, and *Lucian* with both! --- *Plato* with *Pliny*, and *Dio* with *Falconerius!* the imaginations of poets, and the experiments of naturaliſts! antiquity, poetry, philoſophy, and philology! --- wiſdom, and folly! truth, and fiction! --- regions unknown to one another! and regions that never heard of one another! *Aſia* with the iſles of the *Gentiles!* and *America* with both! — all conſpire to eſtabliſh one univerſal deluſion! and all nature join in the atteſtation! produce all her animals, —— and all her vegetables, ---- all her heights, and all her depths, ---- her mountains, her vales, her levels, — to vouch one univerſal lye, with all the irreſiſtible evidence of truth!

FOR-

FORGIVE me, infidelity, if I could as ſoon disbelieve my own exiſtence! — Forgive me, if I could ſooner ſuſpect your veracity and wiſdom: —— Forgive me, if I could as ſoon believe the moſt monſtrous poſition that ever was advanced. ---- Forgive me in one word, if I could, almoſt as ſoon, believe, that there is not, never was, nor ever will be, one man, of thorough learning, true virtue, a ſound head, and an upright heart, throughout the whole tribe of thoſe great lights and ornaments of human nature, ---- the profeſſed enemies of revelation!

The *END* of PART I.